

A N
A T T E M P T

TO ILLUSTRATE THE
FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

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| I. The 13th Chapter of
the First Epistle to the
Corinthians. | V. The Being filled with
all the Fulness of God. |
| II. Creation, Degeneration
and Redemption. | VI. Rewards and Punish-
ments. |
| III. The Spirit shall not al-
ways strive with Man. | VII. The Faith of Sinners,
Satan, and Saints. |
| IV. The Mercies of God,
and the Returns to be
made for them. | VIII. Despising the good-
ness of God, and trea-
suring up Wrath. |

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C O M M E N T, &c.

THE Apostle, in the preceding chapter, hath spoken concerning spiritual gifts; which, at that time, were exceeding common in the church of Christ; and having shewn their nature, number, and use, he concludes with, *Covet earnestly the best gifts*; such as will be most subservient to the service of God, and conducive to the good of mankind.

But as gifts without grace to direct them, will answer no profitable purpose, he adds, *And yet I shew unto you a more excellent way*. Now that way is (*αγαπῆ* love) charity; and agreeable to the sense of the subsequent discourse, may be defined, *The unfeigned love of God and mankind*. The root, or principle of which, is a soul renewed in the image of God. This is the first and principal ground of that grace; and, without which, it is impossible, religiously, to love either the Lord or mankind. The reason of which arises from the nature of the thing. Love is an affection flowing from the quality of the soul; and, according to the nature of the quality, is the affection; consequently, while the quality is contrary to God, the affection cannot be agreeable to him, nor promotive of his praise, and the spiritual profit of men. The not observing this, and laying it as the ground on which to build the doctrine of practical charity, is no better than building without a foundation; it

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being as impossible for a principle, not resembling the Lord in holiness, to produce love to him, as for a structure to stand without something to support it.

And forasmuch as the divine likeness is absolutely necessary to produce that charity which is the subject of the ensuing discourse; so the way by which it obtains, should be thoroughly understood, that where-ever it is necessary to be received, it may be pursued, till the soul is possessed of every possible degree of it.

Nor, perhaps, is it possible, to determine with greater certainty, touching either the time or the manner of its obtaining, than by observing the causes which render it necessary. And, first, the effacing of the image of God, (in all men) by the first offence, is one cause of the necessity of it. Another is, the corruption contracted by personal sin. Hence, it necessarily follows, that the first spring of charity, is the new creation of the soul's quality, in opposition to the evil disposition which was consequent on the fall. And as the one was without any personal offence, so the other is without any personal performance of our own. The time too when these obtained, was early; for if all souls became sinful when Adam sinned, it is reasonable to suppose, that they were all saved from sin as soon as the Saviour was promised. And thus Christ, the second Adam, became to all men what was lost by the first. The natural and necessary consequence of which is, that all are qualified for the kingdom of God while in embryo, and when they come into actual existence. Therefore, dying before they corrupt their moral principle, they constitute a part of the inhabitants of that kingdom. And the same principle in those who live, qualifies them to do in the body, what they who die do out of it.

Now, to this, is objected, "The general wickedness of the world, as being inconsistent with a beginning so good in itself, and so agreeable to God."

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And that there has been, and now is, a great defection from goodness, is granted. But that it springs from roots originally evil, need not so soon be assented to. For, first, it is manifest, that angels sinned in practice, before they were sinful in principle, being created holy. Neither was the number who did so small, nor the defection superficial; rather, the one was great, and the other deep. What then was the origin of practical evil in them? Not moral pravity. Nor yet any destination of the Deity. But only a wrong use of their free agency. And the same is as certain in respect of Adam and Eve; they did not sin by any necessity of nature, but by a misuse of their original rectitude of mind. If then children are born with principles naturally tending to, and productive of, practices pleasing to God; it is as possible for them to sin and corrupt their souls, as it was for Angels and Adam.

But children lie under many disadvantages, which cannot be conceived in the other cases. Angels and Adam were made perfect in body and soul at the first. Nor had they any evil examples. Whereas children are born, in respect of their body, but men in miniature. And if their soul is more perfect in itself; yet because it is contracted in its situation, it is of no more use at that time, than if it were imperfect in itself. Hence, sense and appetite are then their principal guides. And as these take the lead, they have, through the want of restraint and instruction from others, a tendency to corrupt their minds. Besides, generally, they have the objects of evil examples for their imitation; and that being the way whereby their lives are formed, things evil in themselves are almost unavoidably learnt; which, though not evil to them at that time, by reason of their ignorance; yet as they grow up with them, and thereby become habitual; when they attain to the use of reason, they make so many parts

of their personal, and consequently evil and condemnable practice. Hence, being early imitated into evil, the world is to them a school of wrong, in which they generally make great proficiency.

Moreover, as the world is now rather in an artificial than a natural state; the acquiring that kind of learning, and knowledge of things which are thereby rendered necessary; has, I presume, an unhappy effect on the moral powers of the mind, by reason of the time and the intenseness of the application, required. Now these, and other things of a correspondent kind shew, that children are unfavourably circumstanced, in respect of religion; and, therefore, if free agents sinned in better circumstances, why should it be thought strange, that the beginning of evil now takes its rise from the abuse of free agency.

It is certainly more consistent with Scripture, the Lord's moral government, and experience to suppose, that they begin life with good than with evil principles. With Scripture, which affirms that all are made righteous by the second Adam, in opposition to their being made sinners by the first. With the Lord's moral government, as he cannot require them to serve him, but in consequence of being qualified, by an inward principle, equal in quality and quantity to what is required in practice. And with experience, it being certain that the longer sin is continued in, the weaker is the restraint from it, and the more natural and agreeable it is; which supposes, that they are best in the beginning.

But notwithstanding this, it is still evident, that many are become so corrupt as to retain no part of that disposition which produces divine charity. Others, it is probable, have retained a measure of it. And some, perhaps, the whole. However, according to the degree of deadness to the divine nature, it is as necessary for them to be renewed to a holy state of mind, as if they had never been possessed

ed of it; for, so far as they are corrupt, they are incapable of discharging their duty, by loving the Lord and keeping his commandments. And where that corruption is complete, there is a perfect contrariety to God; a mind dead to him in itself, condemnable in its practice, and in continual danger of being damned.

Now this is the condition of all habitual sinners, whether cursers, swearers, liars, drunkards, whoremongers, thieves, robbers, murderers, covetous persons, &c.—Of all who are possessed of, governed by, and walk in pride, passion, self-will, &c. And of all, however free from gross offences, whose religion is only of the outside sort; who pay the customary tribute of saying prayers, receiving sacraments, hearing sermons, reading, &c. without knowing, loving, or delighting in God.

These then being principled with a diabolical disposition, a mind dead to and at enmity with all that is divine; cannot, while so circumstanced, love the Lord. Than such, Satan himself is not more contrary to, nor less capable of loving him. Whoever then would have the grace of charity, must undergo a great change; must be changed from earthly and devilish, to heavenly and divine affections, as the effect of being renewed by the Holy Ghost: for from the divine likeness only, can the love of God proceed.

To which purpose, the state of the soul must be discovered, laid open to its own view, either by a divine and direct illumination alone, or by its being accompanied with some instance of the Lord's justice or mercy, law or providence, or whatever else he shall choose as an instrument whereby to convey the conviction. Sin must appear exceeding sinful, as being the effect of a careless or wilful contempt of God, his government, threatnings, promises, punishments, and rewards. Guilt and wrath must

likewise take hold of, press hard upon, and be ready, according to the apprehension of the sinner, to plunge him into perdition. The sinfulness of his nature too, the evil inclination and dangerous tendency of his tempers and affections must be so seen as to appear unholy and hellish, the reverse of God and all that is good. From which will flow, the fear of God, of death, and of damnation; shame, sorrow, weeping, lamentation, and woe; hatred of sin, a loathing and detestation of himself, &c.

Now this sight and sense of sin and danger, will prepare the soul for that salvation which the Lord Jesus purchased for, and has promised to all who rely upon him. To the obtaining of which, repentance in forsaking sin and living a new life; faith in the purchase, promise, and person of the Saviour; and prayer, with the use of all other means must be entered on, and earnestly continued in, till mercy for what has been amiss, and grace to love and delight in the Lord, have been obtained.

And to render the soul completely capable of loving him, it must proceed from one degree of grace to another, till it be entirely principled therewith; till the little leaven has leavened the whole lump; the effects of which will be, a perfect preparation for every part of the Lord's service, a complete and constant union with him, and a habitual preparation for heaven. In which excellent condition, the faculties, the mind, will and affections of the soul, will be restored to their original rectitude and use. The mind will be like the unclouded day, full of light arising from itself and its union with the Lord, whereby the state of the soul will be clearly seen, as it relates to the Lord's love, image, and kingdom; and which, while it continues thus, will be a sight affording full satisfaction, touching all these particulars. Duty, likewise, to God and man, will be discerned in every common concern, in all that per-
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tains to christianity. And what is superadded thereto, as extraordinary, will be easily seen by an eye so clear and strong. The effects, also, of duty done or not done, will be conspicuous, perceived in their proper colours, by reason of the clearness and strength of the understanding in moral matters; whereby the soul will rejoice in what is well, and grieve for what is ill done.—The will too, in the perfectly restored state, will be so fully conformed to the Lord's as to have no reluctance to, but, rather, a constant readiness, (on the first intimation of his) to do and suffer whatever he requires; continually crying, the will of the Lord be done.—And hence, of course, as inseparable consequences, the affections, (which are but the effluxes or flowings forth of the mind and will in particular, or of the moral soul in general) will harmonize, perfectly agree with the state of it both in respect of quality and quantity; loving and hating, hoping and fearing, joying and sorrowing, &c. as they agree or disagree with the nature of the objects with which they have to do.

And as a pure and perfect principle is the first, proper, and principal cause; so those who are imperfect in that, cannot discharge the whole duty of charity. Their defect in practice must be equal to that of their principle; and without exceeding great care will be greater, by reason of the opposition made by the evil to the good principle, and by the tendency of temptation, trials, &c. Hence, it is highly necessary for such, to exert themselves in the use of their present ability, that they may, according to the measure of it, have a conscience void of offence; which will have excellent effects in respect of receiving more: *For if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.* By which procedure, their practice will bear

bear some proportion to their duty. And he who does not despise the day of small things, will bear with their imperfection both of principle and practice, till the one is taken away by an intire renewal, and the other by perfect love.

Now this is the ground of charity, that which qualifies to act in all things according to the rules thereof. Betwixt which, and the judgment of some, there is a small difference.—Some seem to be so insensible of a disposition naturally producing charity, and one as necessarily the contrary, that they suppose all men equally capable of it, in their present condition.—Others discern a difference in mens moral state; and yet suppose the most immoral to be sufficient, without supernatural assistance, to contract a divine quality and its consequent affection of charity, by habituating themselves to acts of charity. But that is impossible; for no human efforts, without a divine concurrence, can so change the quality of a sinful spirit, as to kindle in it a holy fire, the pure flames of which will burn in loving gratitude to God, and good-will to men. That is the Lord's prerogative only: *A new heart, saith he, will I give you; and, I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.* The meriting cause of which, is Christ, who, by his passion, procured this and every other spiritual blessing. The efficient cause, is the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth the souls of men.—Others, on the contrary, have contended for the help of this spirit, as the cause of love to God and man; but resolved it into his operation on the heart, rather than into a change wrought by him in the disposition of it; thereby making love depend on the Lord's pleasure, touching the time when, the manner how, and the measure of it. But this, I judge, is contrary to the nature of a personal and free principle, by which alone

alone man is rendered accountable for his conduct. Which principle, as it resides in him, and is the seat of his affections, is so much in his own power as that he may use or abuse it according to his pleasure. —And others, who have insisted on sanctification by grace, as the ground of divine love; have, in effect, confounded the degrees of that change, by supposing a person capable of loving the Lord with all his heart, &c. when it was but in part renewed. But in this, as well as in other cases, the effect cannot rise above its cause. Only so far then as the heart is purified, and principled with the moral likeness of the Lord, can it love him. —And some, who, though allowing a perfect principle of grace; have, notwithstanding, affirmed that such can do nothing of themselves; that they cannot act from this inherent principle, but as it is actuated by the Spirit of the Lord. But this attributes too little to man to make him the author of his own actions, and too much to the Almighty to be the judge and rewarder of them. —The truth is, that a heart renewed in love, into the loving likeness of the Lord, is the first and principal cause of divine charity. But though this naturally inclines to love, yet being a personal principle, and under the government of a man's self, the fruit of it, in loving the Lord and mankind, depends on the use of his free agency, in respect of it. The second, but indeed, casual cause of love, is so much of the divine influence and other assistances as the Lord gives by his spirit and in the way of his providence. By these, the duty of charity in its length, breadth, depth, and height may be done.

Now the Apostle, agreeable to his proposition, to shew a more excellent way; begins this chapter with a description of the insufficiency of tongues, without charity, to answer any profitable purpose: *v. 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not*

not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Tongues were a talent, in the Apostle's time, which cost men no labour to learn; for they spake as the spirit gave them utterance. And these being what the Corinthians gloried in and boasted of; the comparison was well calculated to convince them of their folly, in priding themselves in what was perishable in itself, and unprofitable in its use, separate from, and in comparison of, charity.

The excellencies of the gift of tongues, are diversity of languages, elegancy of speech, and readiness of utterance. And as touching the variety of languages, that, originally, was rather a curse than a blessing, being inflicted on the builders of Babel to prevent their building a tower whose top should reach unto heaven. And had the world continued to speak one language, much of the time now spent in the study of tongues, had been spared, and might have been spent to better purpose. And notwithstanding that tongues are necessary for understanding the original scriptures, &c. and, in that respect, profitable; yet separate from charity, they are no better than the noise of sounding brass, or the melody of a tinkling cymbal. For how can it profit a man to speak all the dead and living languages in the world, if his soul is unholy, and consequently incapable of so loving the Lord and mankind, as to live to the honour of the one, and the advantage of the other? Without these, life is lost, it answers no profitable purpose; God is not glorified, the soul is not saved, nor others edified; and yet these are the ends for which life is, and without which both soul and body will be lost for ever.

Nor is the elegancy of language, without this grace, of any signification. Could we speak in the most florid and polite manner; were we masters of the most flowing rhetorick; yea, had we the tongue of an angel, accomplished with all the charms of di-
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vine and human eloquence; yet without charity to direct it to right purposes, to make it subservient to the honour of the Almighty, and the interest of men; it would be as insignificant as the tinkling sound of a cymbal.

Nor is the greatest readiness of speech and volubility of the tongue, undirected by this grace, of any real service. For that which does not rise from this root, cannot have right ends in view; where the grace of God is not the center, the Lord's praise and man's spiritual profit, are not the circumference. These are so far inseparable, as that the last cannot be without the first, the effect without the cause. Notwithstanding then that promptness of speech, and fluency of expression, when they flow from a sanctified soul, and have holy ends in view, are excellent talants; yet without them, they are but pompous sounds, and unprofitable bombast.

How evident then is it, that the greatest knowledge of tongues, the most polite language, and the greatest fluency of speech, (which are but the effects of the rational faculty and well ordered bodily organs, and which are often found in the worst of men) if separate from the grace of God, are of no value in themselves, answer no religious purpose to their possessor, are unacceptable to God, and unprofitable to men. Yea, without that grace, they generally produce the most pernicious effects; they feed mens pride in making them think too highly of themselves, and too disparagingly of others who have them not; render them more capable of corrupting the word of God and deceiving mankind; and make it more difficult for them to renounce their own wisdom, that they may be made wise by the wisdom of God.

Hence, it necessarily follows, that all the real excellency, and usefulness of tongues, flows from their being grafted on a principle of grace in the heart,
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and directed to right purposes by the love of God and mankind. And when thus raised and directed, they make their possessors more eminent instruments in proclaiming the honour of God, and the way of salvation to men.—How happy then is the subject of these sacred and sublime attainments! Being constituted agreeable to God in his excellent holiness, and having gifts qualifying to shew forth his praise, and to live to the profit of many; all the outward excellencies of this world, its profits and pleasures, honours and praise, pomps and splendors, and whatever else it affords, are poor, low, perishing things in comparison of them. They leave the soul barren of good, and brutish in knowledge, sinful and miserable, under the power of evil spirits, and liable to eternal torments. On the contrary, these fill it with the fruits of goodness, and give it the knowledge of God, make it holy and happy, deliver it from the dominion of the devil, and from the danger of being damned.

V. 2. *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.* The gift of prophecy has several significations: As, first, foretelling things to come. Thus Moses, and many others, who foretold the coming of the Messiah, his birth, life, death, resurrection, &c. had the gift of prophecy: To him gave all the prophets witness. 2. It signifies to expound, and apply the Scriptures: *Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy, for he that prophesieth speaketh to men, to edification, exhortation and comfort.*

And though I understand all mysteries. Now a mystery signifies something that is hid, or hard to be understood. And mysteries are many; for there are mysteries in nature, providence, and religion. All the works of Creation; in particular, the elements

elements of which they consist, and their various combinations, whereby some are hard, others soft, some heavy, others light. Likewise the specific differences of matter and spirit, of active and passive beings, and the various kinds and degrees of intelligence which obtain, &c. are mysterious.—The mysteries of *Providence* are the diurnal and annual motion of the earth; the one of which produces day and night, and the other all the different kinds and degrees of climes and seasons. The perpetual motion of the sea, which preserves it pure, and assists navigation. The fanning of the air by winds and storms. The earth and its hemisphere hanging in ether. The sun's attraction of water into the clouds. Its being purged of its saltness and returned fresh. The bearing up of the clouds on the wings of the wind. The pressing of the atmosphere upon, and binding all close, and bursting the clouds to water the earth, &c.—The mysteries of *Religion* are the things added to natural religion, by revelation. In particular, the fall of men by the first, and their rise by the second Adam. The sacrifice of Christ for mens actual sins, and their justification from them. The sanctification of the soul by the Holy Ghost. The union subsisting between the Lord and believing souls. The resurrection of the dead, &c.

And though I have all knowledge; of things divine and human; a full comprehension of what is past, present, and to come; which, as it includes the whole of Being, extends to all that is knowable.

And though I have all miracle-working faith. This faith flows from the gift, and not the grace of the Spirit. It is so firm a persuasion of, and so great a dependance on, the Lord's power, as engages him to act for them in removing mountains of difficulties, and doing what is otherwise impossible to be done. Yet, with all these, without charity, faith the apostle, I am nothing; nothing in myself, nothing in the

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account of God, and nothing to be accounted of by men.

Here then, as in a glass, may be seen, what is man without the grace of God, and its exercise in charity. If he could foretel future events, expound and apply the scriptures; discern all the mysteries of creation, providence, and grace; know all that is knowable of things temporal and spiritual, and by faith perform the greatest human impossibilities; yet without love to God and man, which it is impossible to have without a holy disposition of heart, as the principle of it, he is nothing; no Christian, no servant of God, no heir of his kingdom; and a greater nothing he need not, cannot be, as that implies the want of all good, and the possession of all evil.

Let not then the prophet glory in foretelling future things, or in giving the sense of sacred scripture; nor the discernor of the springs of nature, &c. pride himself in his penetration; nor the ideal man boast of his baseless fabrick, which death may destroy in a day; nor he who by faith can do wonders, pique himself on his performance; for all these, without charity, are nothing, yea, worse than nothing; for by how much such are superior to other sinners in gifts, knowledge, &c. by so much is their condemnation increased. As such, how little have wise men, if they be wicked, to boast of, when all the things wherein they excel others, make them by so much more like the devil. All boasting then of parts and performances must cease and for ever be silent. No glorying save in the cross of Christ the procuring cause of all blessings; and in a likeness to, and love of God. All the gifts of prophecy, understanding mysteries, knowledge, &c. will soon see an end; the longest time of their continuance, is but the short term of life; and if their possessors be destitute of divine charity, they will be doomed to dwell

dwell in regions of sorrow and doleful shades, where hope and happiness cannot come, and where devils and damned souls will be their associates for ever. But charity, the offspring of the image of God, the fair daughter of a divine disposition, the center and end of all graces, and the source of all sacred services will survive time, and run parallel with the ages of eternity, in unutterable sweetness and satisfaction. How amiable, how excellent, and how lasting then is charity! Happy beyond description, is the heart that is possessed of it!

V. 3. *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* These words advance, beyond the preceding, the excellency of charity, by preferring it above, and exhibiting the unprofitableness of the largest liberality, and giving the body to be burnt, without it.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.—The feeding, cloathing, and providing for the poor, is one of the principal duties of christianity. It has many commands to require it, and promises of reward to encourage it. St. Paul says, "Forget not to do good and to communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. And he charges them that are rich in this world to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life: For he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and look what he layeth out shall be paid him again." What is given, is not, as some suppose, lost, but lent to the Lord, who will repay it with ample reward. For the judgment of God, in man's future account, and consequently his eternal reward, will principally proceed upon having done or not done those acts of beneficence. He that giveth to the poor, and to the members of Christ's mystical body

in particular, as he hath ability, time, and opportunity, shall go into life eternal, and he that hath not done so, shall go into everlasting punishment. (Matth. xxv.)—But as the Saviour and Saint Paul seem to differ; to reconcile them, and shew the propriety of both, it is necessary to observe, that they proceed upon different principles. The account here given by Christ is, that the righteous shall go into eternal life. But in order to understand this aright, it must be observed, that it is not ministering to the poor that constitutes a man righteous. Rather, righteousness, in the case of those who never sinned, is a full conformity to God in holiness of heart, and to his law in the life and conversation. And in the case of those who have sinned, it is remission of sin, and a renewed nature: For *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*. It is this that constitutes a sinner righteous. Doing good, is the consequence of that constitution. Now, St. Paul, by giving all his goods to feed the poor, means that which may be done without this kind of constitution; the acting from pride, or for applause, or from human sympathy, or to procure a pardon, or a place in heaven, or for any other reason wherein the love of God and mankind are not concerned; and, therefore, they perfectly agree; only the one speaks of a person acting from a right, and the other from a wrong principle; he that acts from a right principle, shall have a reward according to his works, but he that acts from a wrong one, though he give all his goods to the poor, shall perish for ever.

Hence then, it is certain, that without charity, as the moving cause, and the glory of the Lord and the advantage of men, as the end; feeding the poor profiteth nothing: Without these, neither the nature nor the degree of the gift, availeth any thing to salvation. *If I give all my goods*, not a part only; piece by piece to the poor, not to the rich; with my
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own hand while I live, not by will when I die, without proper motives and views, it profiteth nothing, neither here nor hereafter; inasmuch as it is not good, as neither springing from grace, nor done with a right design; and the giver being unholy, is incapable of a reward in glory.

And as giving all that a man hath to the poor, profiteth nothing without charity; so neither does *martyrdom*, without the same thing. *And though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, I am nothing.* This is the highest outward proof that can be given of sincerity in religion. For as most men will give all that they have rather than part with life, so he that giveth his life, parts with that which others prize above all earthly price. And yet if a man go so far rather than renounce a true or a false religion; if not led thereto by the love of God and man, to obey the one and embolden the other, it profiteth nothing; for the burning of the body, will not supply the place of a sanctified soul, nor be accepted of God as a substitute for love and the services of it.

With what propriety then does the Apostle here speak! How he militates against the method mistakenly pursued by many for salvation! Charity, which covereth a multitude of sins, being interpreted of the outward act, and accounted meritorious, is, by such, substituted in the place of the Saviour, thinking, that they shall be saved for their much giving. But, alas! this is what the Apostle cannot allow; with such sacrifices, separate from charity, God is not well pleased. They are excellent in the case of those in whom that grace resides; but in none else. Whoever then would be saved, must lay another foundation than feeding the poor, and giving his body to be burnt; inasmuch as they may be without charity. And without that, notwithstanding his doing and suffering, he differs but little from the devil. Yea, they are in disposition, design, &c. the

same; and, in all as contrary to the Lord as they can be; for *God is love*. What then is man without the likeness and love of God? Alas, if not more wicked, yet far more foolish than fiends; for though surrounded with sufficient evidence, from the works of creation and providence, of the being and goodness of God, yet he is both a stranger and an enemy to him; he knows him not by any sign or sense in his own soul; he neither tastes nor sees that he is gracious, through pardon and peace, nor is he sensible of his holiness, justice, and wrath, by a guilty conscience. Hence, being void of the knowledge of God, he neither loves nor fears him; and therefore necessarily opposes him in all his thoughts, words, and works. Himself, as distinguished from, and as standing in direct opposition to God, is his center; he does all from and for himself, from his own dark and diabolical spirit, and for his own interest and honour: So his works being neither wrought in, nor for the Lord; he may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burnt, and go to the devil when he has done.

Now the Apostle, in the preceding verses, having set forth the excellencies of charity, and how far it exceeds all other spiritual gifts; proceeds in the four following verses, to describe the nature of this virtue: *Charity suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* These are the properties of charity. We will begin with the first:

Charity suffereth long. The word in the original is *macrothymei*, and signifies patience, or slowness to anger; and, therefore, is that act of charity which makes men govern their tempers when injured by others. A grace this highly necessary, and of exceeding

ing great use; for some are of such fierce and hasty spirits, that, like tinder, they catch at every spark, and are inflamed on the slightest occasions, and become uneasy both to themselves and others. Now charity corrects this hastiness of spirit, and gives men a greater command of themselves, than to be thus inflamed; for it suffereth long, and so is opposed to that weakness and impatience of spirit, which soon flies into a passion, and cannot bear the least air of opposition. Hence then, as it preserves from hasty or precipitate proceedings, it prevents many evils and inconveniencies. But more especially, it militates against all doing of mischief; all retaliation of wrongs, of rendering evil for evil. There are some, who, when justly offended, meditate revenge: but charity, which suffereth long, is not hasty to requite it; the charitable man deals not in that way; if he is wronged, he wrongs not again. Nor, in case of delays, will he stand with his debtors for a day, nor take all the advantage which the law will allow. He will not break friendship for the first offence, but will wait to overcome evil with good, being willing to hearken to consistent terms of accommodation, and is ready to accept the least submission.

But as the Almighty's long-suffering sometimes fees an end; that when sinners, instead of being led thereby to repentance, are hardened in their sins, his abused favour turns to fury, and his former acts of mercy inflame his wrath, and increase the severity of his justice; so if men, through the forbearance of others, do not cease, but add to their injuries, they forfeit all right to charity; which, in such cases, is much better exercised in the punishment, than in the pardon of them.

But though this is right, yet it is charity's last refuge, and only exercised in matters of great moment: for as some things displease without doing much hurt;

hurt; and other things that are hurtful are done without design; charity, which suffers long, and forgives much, will forgive such innocent and undesigned offences. And where the damage is greater and more voluntary, and the offender irreclaimable by milder methods; yet the charitable man will not seek right by private revenge, but leave it to him to whom vengeance belongs, who will either do it himself, or by those whom he hath appointed to execute wrath on them that do evil. But in this legal way of redressing wrong, he will not use indirect arts, nor exceed a just reparation. In a word, charity, which is the fruit of the image of God drawn on the soul, will herein imitate his example, will suffer long, forgive much, and punish only when it will profit the offender, or when there is no place for pardon. Thus charity is long-suffering.

Charity is kind: The difference betwixt this and the other is, that the former helps us to bear and suffer evil, and the latter to wish and to do good: So that this is an higher act of charity; adding to long-suffering, loving kindness.

The word in the original is *chrescuetai*, and signifies gentleness and benignity of spirit; which dispose us to be benevolent and beneficent: The former of which, respects the inward, and the latter the outward man.

Benevolence is that act of charity which consists in wishing well to another's welfare; and produces a sympathy suitable to their state; a rejoicing in their prosperity, and a sorrow in their sufferings. It likewise shews itself in acts of beneficence: In particular, in supplicating the Lord for them, that spiritual blessings, mercy, and grace may be given, that their souls may be saved, and that they may be fruitful in every good word and work: for charity, which originates in and issues from the image of God, raises the soul above the low considerations of this life, to things

things of a sublime, a spiritual, and eternal nature. Hence, as the effect of that sacred sympathy, there is a disinterested and ardent desire for souls, proportionable to their value above mortal bodies and material things. And, indeed, charity is never so kind as when it is labouring to promote the spiritual profit of men. This is its principal employ; herein more especially it imitates its author. God, whose goodness to bodies is abundant, bestows, notwithstanding, his best benefits on souls. Nor will all other things answer any great and lasting purpose; for if a man had the whole temporal world, without the salvation of his soul, it would signify nothing. The charitable man considers this, and calculates his kindness accordingly. He knows that man has a soul, which will survive his body. He sees its wretchedness, by the outward sign of a sinful life. He discerns its danger, by its deserts. He weeps over it, and wishes it were well. He cares for it, and therefore ministers the kindness of reproof, instruction, &c. to prevent its destruction, and promote its salvation.

And from the same benevolent disposition, temporal beneficence flows; in feeding the poor, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, relieving the oppressed, instructing the ignorant, resolving the doubtful, comforting the afflicted, and doing all the good consistent with time, circumstances, &c. for kindness makes every man's condition our own—whereby we become affected toward them, as we should be toward ourselves in similar circumstances.

Kindness, likewise, softens and sweetens mens spirits, and makes them affable and easy to be treated with. It also renders them conversable, complaisant, and condescending. Yea, being free and ingenuous, it gives honour to all to whom it is due, and complies as far as it constantly can, with all conditions of men.

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The kindness of charity too, extends to all orders of men, and to all of every order. *As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men.* None, no not enemies, are to be excluded from our kindness. *Love, saith the Lord, your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you.* Yea, the worse men are, the greater necessity there is to be kind to them, in instructing, reprov- ing, praying for them, &c. Being most out of the way, and exposed to the greatest danger; charity cannot shew greater kindness, than when it casts a ray of pity on them, and from a sympathy with, seeks to save them from sin and suffering, by provok- ing them to consider their ways, remember their lat- ter end, and turn to the Lord. This is copying him, who cries, *How long will ye love your folly? Turn you at my reproof, and I will pour out my spirit unto you, and ye shall live.*

And yet charity, which is kind to all, can con- sistently make a difference; it can prefer relations be- fore strangers, friends before foes, and good men before bad; for when the Apostle commands us to do good to all men, he adds, *especially to the household of faith.*

How wonderful a grace then is charity; which not only makes men patient in respect of opposers, but also kind; rendering blessing for cursing, over- coming evil with good, and delighting to promote their prosperity! And yet, notwithstanding, it is only what it ought to be; for all should be disposed to contribute to all orders and degrees of men, whatever may tend to their temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare. It is the disposition of the Deity, who is the pattern of all perfection, and whom to imitate is man's highest honour; and, by necessary consequence, the closer the imitation, the more honourable it is. When then the godlike law of love is deeply, perfectly written on the heart; kind-
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ness becomes conspicuous, blazons forth in beams of blessings, in civil department, in sweetness of expression, and in every other possible way to make them sensible of its salutary influence, for their salvation, &c.

Charity envieth not. From the kindness of charity, which delighteth to do good, the Apostle proceeds to that which envies not others their own good. The word in the original is *zeloi*, which being sometimes taken in a good sense, signifies a pious and well ordered zeal for the glory of God, and the good of mankind.

But there is another sense, which St. James styles *Pycros zelos*, a bitter zeal; and which St. Paul calls *zeloi*, emulation, and ranks among the works of the flesh; by which is to be understood those inordinate desires of the soul which carry it out in too eager a pursuit of the profits and honours of this world; especially, that part of them which is the property of other persons; and which, in consequence, makes them envy others. It is in this sense, that charity envith not.

Now envy is that disorder of mind which makes men repine at another's prosperity; and which often discovers itself in disparaging expressions, and other methods which militate against that for which they are envied.—The objects of envy are generally the gifts of the mind or of fortune. And some cannot endure that others should be thought wiser or better than themselves; as thinking, that all which is spoken in praise of others, is a detracting from them; and, therefore, take all opportunities to disparage their abilities, and diminish their esteem. Others are grieved at the temporal advancement of persons whom they do not approve, ascribing all their preferment, rather to favour and fortune, than to any merit or desert of their own. Thus envy makes

makes that which should be the object of joy, the occasion of discontent.

Those in whom this evil is generally found, are persons in whom pride or covetousness predominate; for he that hath high thoughts of himself, cannot easily see others rise above him; and such as too eagerly pursue the world, will endeavour to stop those who seek to go before them; inasmuch as they look upon the glory of others as a darkening of their own; so that as light is offensive to a sore eye, another's prosperity is grievous to an evil one.

Now envy is an act of injustice against God; for it denies him the disposal of his benefits. Nor is it less so to our neighbour; inasmuch as it judges him unworthy of the blessings which God hath given him. It is likewise evil to the owner; in that it is painful to the mind, and hurtful to the body.

But charity envieth not. It is kind, and therefore wisheth well to all men. It makes men desire, that others should do well, and prompts them to promote, by all possible means, their prosperity: The charitable man being ever ready to assist by his prayers, council, and endeavours. And as all men are glad to see the success of their labours; charity which provokes them to promote it, cannot make them envy their own success, in the accomplishment of it. Yea, charity makes another's happiness our own; it adds to our comfort to cause, and to see them succeed. This is to love our neighbour as ourselves; and where this love dwells, there is no place for envy: For charity envieth not.

But, alas! how little of this is found? How few are there that desire, and delight in their neighbour's prosperity? Yea, how many who desire, and find pleasure in their adversity? What a grief is it to some to see others prosper? How many think themselves miserable, because others are happy? How contrary then is envy to christianity? Nothing renders

renders us more unlike the Lord; for *He is love*, and delights to enrich, and rejoices in the prosperity of his creatures; nothing is more contrary to the nature, commands, and example of our Saviour, who gave himself for the salvation of men; nothing is more opposite to the state and felicity of heaven, which is the mansion of peace and love, where all the inhabitants rejoice in the happiness of each other. Envy then is the dark passion of the devil, the evil and envious one; the state of hell, and the disposition of the damned, who do nothing but despair of their own, and envy the happiness of others. In a word, envy hinders the happiness of him that has it here, and qualifies him for the uneasy and restless conversation of furies hereafter.—How happy then are they who have the grace of charity! They can imitate the most excellent; enjoy, and be satisfied with their own, nor envy others; yea, find pleasure in the prosperity of others: can applaud their parts and performances, and rejoice in their success. How divine a grace is that which does this! And how much to be desired!

Charity vaunteth not itself: The love which envieth not others, does not vaunt itself. The word is *perpereuetai*, and signifies too great affectation of outward shew and appearance; therefore this is that act of charity which suppresseth all vain glory, or the doing things out of vanity or ostentation. There were some in the Apostles days, who used their gifts more for their own glory, than the edification of the church; they affected to speak with tongues not understood of the hearers. Others affected fineness and curiosity of language, eloquent and ornamented with the flowers of rhetorick; by which they sought rather to please, than to profit their hearers.—And some used their gifts to make divisions in the church, affecting to be the heads of parties; with Diatrephas

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they sought pre-eminence, and earnestly desired to preside.

Now charity corrects this vanity, by teaching us to use gifts to the honour of the giver, to prefer his glory before our own. It likewise instigates to act for the edification of others; not courting their applause or preferment, but seeks to do them good and save their souls. Thus, though knowledge puffeth up, yet charity edifieth; knowledge, separate from charity, elates and looks to its own ends only, but charity humbles and looks to the ends of others also; it corrects the windy quality of knowledge, and renders it subservient to the service of mankind.

But though charity vaunteth not itself, it does not prohibit the use of tongues, nor the elegance and ornaments of language, but only the abuse of them. There is a natural desire of glory, which is both innocent and edifying; and, without which, man will neither do much for the honour of God, nor the good of mankind; for in steering our course aright through the rough and tempestuous sea of this world, where the waves of prosperity or adversity run high, and threaten a wreck in religion, there is need of sail as well as ballast to make the bark move with a sufficient degree of motion.

But besides the fault of abusing spiritual gifts to bad purpose; there was another, the conferring the gifts of fortune with a vaunting air, rather to raise a tribute of praise, than acting from a charitable principle towards the poor. This was the fault of the Pharisees, who sounded a trumpet to make men sensible of their alms; they aimed principally at the applause of men, fished for honour with the baits of charity.

Now the grace of charity, reduced to practice, is the best remedy for this. It teaches us to do all our good works from a right principle; from love to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. The love we have for the Lord, will make us regard his image in every

every man. And as the worst of men have his natural image, his spirituality and immortality, and others his moral image, his holiness and happiness; so charity teaches us to do them good for the sake of the relation they have to him.—And, likewise, as our neighbours are parts of ourselves, fashioned by the same hand, and subject to the same wants and infirmities; therefore when we consider them as our kinsmen, or ourselves multiplied, and do them good on that account, our charity moves in a right sphere.—Moreover, the Almighty hath not only commanded, but encouraged us to do good works, with an hope of reward; promising, that what is spent in that way, shall be restored an hundred fold, either in kind or value. Seeing then that good may be done to others with an eye to our own interest; so, when with one eye we pity the poor, and place the other on the recompence of reward, our charity proceeds upon a right principle, is done as the Lord hath commanded, and in a way wherein he has promised to reward it.

Hence then though charity does not forbid the use of tongues, nor of elegant and ornamented language, yet it vaunteth not itself; it does not boast of these abilities, nor use them for popular applause, or to gain the name of great, or wise, or knowing; rather, it presseth them into the service, and sacrificeth them to the honour of God, and the good of mankind. And by how much the subject of this excellent grace is furnished with these extraordinary things, by so much it renders it subservient to the most excellent purposes. Happy then the heart where the grace of charity reigns! But happier he, whose abounding abilities of mind and fortune are sanctified by it, and sacrificed to its proper objects! Such, in their sphere, imitate the Almighty parent of good, whose beneficence is scattered with a bountiful hand. From a principle of piety to God and humanity to

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man, and an interest of their own, they act; and thus, notwithstanding the seeming inconsistency, duty to God and man, and advantage to ourselves, harmonize; and, as the former abounds, the latter increases. But charity is the instigator to, and the altar that sanctifieth the whole. O excellent charity!

Is not puffed up. This property of charity is nearly allied to that which precedes it. The difference is, That as *vaunteth not itself* relates principally to the outward appearance; so not being *puffed up* pertains to the inward principle: They differ as the effect does from the cause.

The word rendered puffed up, is, in the original, *ou physiotai*, which signifies an inward tumor or rising of the mind, whereby men think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; and, therefore, it stands opposed to modesty and humility.

His soul, saith the prophet, that is lifted up, is not upright in him; it is neither right with God, his neighbour, nor himself. This self-conceit, causes some to doubt of the existence of the Deity, in direct opposition to the evidence resulting from the things that are seen. Others question his care of his creatures in governing the world, as supposing that he leaves all to the conduct of second causes. Some, because they cannot comprehend every thing that is revealed, reject the whole; disdaining to take any thing upon the credit of another. Others, who receive the whole, measure all by their own standard, admitting of no meaning but what comes within their own compass; hence, they weed the Scriptures of all its mysteries, and bring it down to human comprehension. Some reject all internal revelation; all the teachings of God's spirit, all manifestations of mercy and the divine influences, and thereby make void all the spiritual parts of the Scriptures. Others, in respect of orthodoxy, set up their judgment as the standard of all the rest; so that no man

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is any thing farther than he falls in with their way of thinking, in non-essential things. In a word, pride is a principle productive of many public and private quarrels; it fills men with a conceit of their own parts and performances; hence what they cannot comprehend, they will either reject or wrest to their own sense. Thus many quarrel with the Most-High, because he has not made, nor governs, nor teaches all things as they think he should do; with his providence, as it sometimes opposes their profits and pleasures; and with religion, in that it neither lies level with their shallow capacities, nor allows them the full gratification of their sensual appetites.

Now the love of God and man, is a most excellent remedy for this unruly evil. It is the best preservative from atheism, as it is an additional evidence to God's outward works, of his existence; *for love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.* And where reason cannot comprehend, love makes it rely. If then divine providence, in some particulars, be inscrutable, charity reconciles the soul to it, by resolving it into the wisdom and goodness of God, which can neither err nor act unjustly. Love, likewise, so levels the mind, as to make it submit to the mysteries of scripture. It teaches that the Lord can, consistent with his moral government, reveal many things which men cannot comprehend; and that obedience in believing what is above men, is as much a duty when required, as to conform to commands of a practical kind, that are comprehensible. Things incomprehensible serve as a criterion to faith; and in some cases, salvation itself depends on believing them: The incarnation of Christ; his suffering for the sins of the whole world; the resurrection of the dead, &c. are things too high for man to comprehend; but being revealed, and made necessary to be believed, (by those who have the Bible) there is no solvent for the impossibility

bility of comprehending, and the difficulty of believing them, but a resolution of them into the Lord. This, love, is not at a loss to do; for it not only preserves the mind from opposing what appears to be impossible; but likewise makes reason stoop to faith, whereby we are kept steady in the belief of divine mysteries, though we cannot fathom the depth of them. Yea, love not only suffers, but requires us to suppose God to be wiser than we are, and that he can do and order many things, of which we are neither able, nor concerned to know the reasons. It likewise shews the weakness and imperfection of our understanding, even in common affairs, that we daily see things which we cannot comprehend; and that teaches us to yield to spiritual truths which are above us, and to acquiesce in divine revelation, both of the external and internal kind. Thus does love keep down the mind, and make knowledge, which would otherwise puff up, to edify.

Love likewise will teach us to be subject one to another; and, instead of lifting up ourselves above, to esteem others better than ourselves; not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith; and in honour to prefer one another. These humble thoughts of ourselves, and this charitable opinion of others, would prevent differences and divisions, which are often the effects of pride, and proceed from mens being puffed up with a vain conceit of themselves. This humble temper too, in doubtful cases, would make men as willing to know the truth as a traveller is to find the right way to his journey's end.—Let us then imbibe much of this humble spirit, as the principle of our practice; which, as it will root out the present evil principle of pride, so will it, if walked in, prevent the being puffed up in future time. Other supposed remedies of this evil, and preventives
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of its effects, may do something; yet nothing but this can be effectual; for while the root remains, it will ever be ready to produce the fruit of being puffed up. But if the root be eradicated, the fruit will fail. The divine image in perfection, will be a natural preservative from being puffed up, as the native property of that principle is humility. But it will not necessarily and absolutely preserve it, inasmuch as free-will, or the power of choice, implies a possibility of acting contrary to the dictates of nature. So it was with, and so it was done by angels, in their primitive purity. Notwithstanding, being a soil containing the genuine seeds of humility and modesty, it will be easy to act in subordination to every supreme command. Love issuing from the holy habit of the heart, concurred with, and directed by, the right use of free-agency, will secure from a sinful illation of soul, and render it subservient to the service of God and mankind.

Doth not behave itself unseemly. From that property of charity which subdues pride and suggests humility, the apostle proceeds to that which checks all unseemly behaviour, the usual attendant of the one, and teaches a due and decent demeanour, the natural effect of the other.

The word in the original is *aschemonei*, which signifies to act out of order or rule, to mistake our scheme or figure, and to do things out of sorts; the reverse of that rule which directs, that *all things be done decently and in order.*

The expression alludes either to soldiers in an army, who are to keep the rank prescribed by their superior officers; or to work-men in architecture, who are to work according to the model given by the chief architect; the want of which, in both cases, argues contempt, and produces confusion. Agreeable to which, it is a duty incumbent on all men to keep within the lines of their duty to God and man, in
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their civil and religious relations; without which they walk disorderly, and behave themselves unseemly.

Mankind may be considered as consisting of three orders of men, viz. superiors, inferiors, and equals. Superiors are those who are over others in church and state, according to their several orders and degrees, from the King to the lowest in authority in both. Now charity, in respect of superiors, teaches to honour and reverence their persons, according to their rank or degree; giving honour not only to all to whom it is due, but also proportioning it to the dignity of their persons, or the authority of their places. Likewise to submit to, and obey their lawful commands, with willingness, readiness, and cheerfulness. This is that decent deportment which is due to superiors, without which we behave ourselves unseemly.

Neither does charity behave itself unseemly in regard of inferiors. It considers all men as being of one kind, an indissoluble link running through the whole. Hence being united by a natural inseparable connection; the highest are to treat the lowest with condescension and kindness: Kings are to consult the peace and prosperity of their subjects; parents the welfare of their children; and masters the good of their servants. The rich are to relieve the poor; the wise to instruct the ignorant; and all that are in places of power are to use it for the defence and encouragement of all that need it: For, charity, wherever it prevails, teaches superiors that they are but stewards of, and accountable for, the power they possess; and that it was given not to oppress, but promote the good of inferiors. Therefore the charitable person, however high in birth, fortune, authority, &c. from the consideration of inferiors being his fellows in one common animal, rational, and immortal nature; redeemed by the same precious blood of Christ;

Christ; and capable of all the happy effects of it both here and hereafter; will be condescending and kind, and imitate him who is loving to every man. This will restrain from all insolent and insulting behaviour towards inferiors, and banish all low and unworthy thoughts of, and treat them as brethren, with the love of benevolence or delight, according to their moral state of mind.

Nor does charity behave unseemly to equals. It saves men from all sour, morose, and surly behaviour towards them. Some are so peevish and froward, so resty and troublesome in their tempers, that it is next to impossible to live peaceably with them. Now charity corrects this roughness and sourness of temper, and puts a sweetness and benignity into nature, which make men easy and conversable. This tincture of divine love is a sovereign remedy for the most dogged disposition. It roots out whatever is diabolical in the temper of the soul, and makes it divine, a fair spotless image of the meek and lowly Jesus. And though hereby it does not destroy the quickness or slowness of the soul's motion, nor the clearness or dulness of its conception; which are properties rather of the spiritual than of the moral nature; yet it so qualifies the whole moral man as to render it a proper subject of every social virtue, as well as of every heavenly grace. Hence, love being the ruling principle, equals in all respects, contend not now for precedence, seek not to rise above each other in their own or others estimation; rather, they give place to, and in honour prefer others before themselves; their carriage towards each other is free, friendly, and obliging, being willing and ready to do them all the good offices they can. In a word, this grace restrains men from all cruelty and oppression; from all falsehood and injustice, and from using any rude and reproachful words or gestures; it keeps them to justice in works, to truth in words,

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fidelity in promises, and honesty in dealings; and, consequently, by restraining from all that is wrong, and exciting to all that is right, it does not behave itself unseemly, in any station or relation.

Let us then cultivate this grace of charity, and give it all the encouragement it is capable of. Let us act in whatever station of life we are in, agreeable to its dictates; deporting ourselves wisely and well, that our carriage may be calculated to conciliate the minds of men to christianity. Happy he who so loves the Lord and mankind, as in every thing to seek to please the one and profit the other! This is the charity which the Lord requires; which man, in a right state of mind, is capable of; and which answers every good purpose both in time and eternity.—And herein more especially it appears, that charity is the author of order; it teaches to act in every sphere for the good of the whole. Nor does it only suffer, but, in opposition to the levelling principle, it supports the different degrees and distinctions of men, by giving to all their due. To the purposes of which, it is well disposed; for, being an emanation from, or a perfect resemblance of, God; it must, in consequence, be calculated to act according to his command. Hence then as its dictates in teaching, and disposition in doing, agree; all who are governed by it will act seemly, suitable to their station and place; the high will condescend to treat the low with kindness, and the low submit to the high, and equals serve each other.

Seeketh not her own. This is another excellent property of charity. In the original it is *ou zetei ta eautēs*, which implies such an immoderate fondness of ourselves, and our own affairs, as excludes all due and decent regard for the concerns of others. Now charity does not so seek her own.

But does charity condemn all self-seeking? In no-wise. Charity begins at home, and is so far from forbidding

forbidding us to seek our own, that it requires us first to mind our own concerns; for he that is not good to himself, will be so to no other person; and therefore our Saviour, in commanding us to love our neighbour as ourselves, supposes that we love ourselves; so that all self-seeking is so far from being inconsistent with charity, that it would be uncharitable not to do it.

But what is that self-seeking which is inconsistent with charity? It is, in the general, that narrowness of spirit which cares for none but itself. There are some who regard not how it fares with others, if they themselves can but live at ease and in plenty; nor who falls into danger, if they escape. These are like the gulf, which sucks in all to itself. They have no sense or feeling but what concerns themselves; they wrap themselves up in their own interest, and count those silly sheep, who bear fleeces for any other end, than to keep themselves warm.

To prefer our own private interest above the public good, is a wrong self-seeking; for we were not born for ourselves only, but for our friends and country also, and are members of society to promote the profit of many. Nor can we subsist without it; we cannot be safe without the protection of superiors; nor live without the labour of inferiors; and we should be miserable without the mutual aid of one another: So our chief aim, as social beings, must be at the good of the whole, by which the welfare of every part may be promoted.

To do, or suffer any evil to be done to another, to compass our own ends, is a sinful self-seeking. This is to rise by the ruin of others; to make their loss our gain. This is self-seeking of the most criminal kind, and, is so far from charity, that it is palpable injustice.

Yea, to refuse to do good to others, because we reap no benefit by it ourselves, is an inordinate self-seeking,

seeking, a mercenary love. But charity is free to do good, though it receive no benefit; it is content with the present pleasure of well-doing, and the future reward annexed to it; these make it ready to every good word and work. Yea, so far is charity from projecting gain by its good works, that its proper objects are the indigent, who cannot make any requital; and the evil and unthankful, who will not; for it gives without hoping to receive again, and does good to those who make no other return than evil.

To prefer a less good to ourselves, before a greater to another, is a degree of wrong self-seeking. Thus he who will not spare a little to save the life, health, or goods of his neighbour, is immoderately fond of himself, and has no regard for another. But charity will not so consult itself as to be at no cost or pains to promote another's profit; rather, like the good Samaritan who set the wounded man on his beast and paid his expence, it obliges its possessor to pursue the profit of others to its own loss; which yet is but a slender imitation of the Saviour, who laid down his life for the good of mankind.

Now this inordinate self-seeking, is the cause of all the deceit and dishonesty in the world; yea, all public commotions and breaches of the peace, spring from this bitter root of self-love. From whence come wars and fightings, but from an inordinate desire of the profits and pleasures of the world; for men are immoderate lovers of themselves. This begets divisions in the church, and troubles in the state; occasions perjuries in courts of justice, fraud in the shop, and injustice every where; it makes many intrude into offices, not to do good, but to enrich themselves, and raise their fortune upon the ruin of their country.—But charity, which seeketh not her own, cures, and prevents all these evils; for it violates no compacts, raiseth no commotions, invades no man's property, interrupts no man's peace,
assaults

assaults no man's person, grinds no poor man's face, nor takes any ewe-lamb out of his bosom; it envies no man's greatness, nor seeks to supplant any; but contrary wise, does all the good it can to all men, and never thinks of evil, but to prevent and suppress it. O excellent charity! were all men governed by thee, how free from sinful self-seeking, and how kind to each other would they be! O when will the time come, when every heart shall be thy hallowed habitation! Thou fairest offspring of the Deity, deign to dwell in the breasts of men, that thy sacred influence may smooth their rugged passions, abate their thirst for sublunary satisfactions, and raise their hearts and hopes to things of a sacred and celestial nature. O for that happy moment when a sinful selfish nature shall perfectly give place to a heavenly and humane principle! Angels and men would then act in concert; conspire to praise the Lord. Yea, sin and self, the opposers of God and man, being utterly destroyed; piety to God and good-will to men, would abound. Sinful self-seeking would then be a stranger in the world; all would equally care for each other. And as their love would be one, so would their delight; they would rejoice in each others felicity as their own. Thus in the primitive days, when great grace was upon the people; their love, delight, rejoicing, suffering, sympathy, sorrow, &c. were common to each and to all. O blessed patterns to all succeeding generations!

Is not easily provoked. The charity which is not sinfully self-seeking, is as right in regard of resentment; it moderates the passion of anger, and keeps it within proper bounds.

The original is *ou paroxynetai*, which signifies not so much being easily as highly provoked: for as the *paroxysm* of a fever, denotes not the easiness of falling into, but the height of the distemper, so *paroxynetai*,

netai, signifies not the being too easily, but too highly provoked.

It differs from long-suffering, in this; that suppresseth all rash and sudden anger, and this restrains all excess of it; and, therefore, to distinguish them, it is better translated, not *highly* provoked.

And that anger, with the passions of love, joy, &c. are both innocent and serve to many excellent purposes, is evident; for being originally planted by the author of nature, they must, like his other works, be good; and, if rightly used, are the chief instruments and ornaments of the soul. Agreeable to which, it is said, *be angry and sin not*; which implies, that anger may be without being evil; and it being a duty, it would, in some cases, be a sin not to be so: which shews that this is rather a perfection, than a perturbation of the soul: therefore charity does not root out, but only regulate this passion, and preserve it from being too highly provoked.

But notwithstanding that anger is eligible, yet, when it is without cause, it is evil. And some are so testy in their temper as often to be angry without any cause. And others so ignorant as to be so without real cause; like the man, who, eagerly pursuing butterflies, was displeased because he could not catch them. Now charity springs from a ground which is contrary to this testiness of temper, viz. the meek mind which was in Christ Jesus; and, therefore, so far as the soul is possessed of it, it is saved from sinful testiness; consequently, when wholly possessed, no part of it remains. If then, in such, any thing of that sort is seen, it is the effect of the bodily temperature, which is peculiar to some persons, families, and nations. But though this kind of temperature is innocent, yet by reason of the connection subsisting betwixt it and the soul in their existing and acting, it renders the subject of
it

it less amiable in the eyes of others, and more uneasy to himself.

Anger is sinful also, when it exceeds due bounds. There is often occasion of disapprobation, displeasure, and reprehension, especially when the glory of God, our own, and our neighbour's welfare are concerned; but if righteous resentment run so high as to make us say or do any thing that is either unreasonable or irreligious, it is wrong; for these are bounds never to be gone beyond.—Now charity, rightly used, secures us from this paroxysm of anger; it will not suffer it to grow to this head, to hurt ourselves or others. For love, in itself, is so soft, mild, benign, condescending, merciful, and kind; that when the razor of resentment cuts deep, these are as oil to soften and smooth the incision, and as balm to heal it. Moreover, love places the passion on its proper object; it transfers it from the sinner to the sin, so far as to bear him good-will, and to be ready to serve him in whatever he can. This corrects resentment, and tends to keep it within proper bounds.

Anger is sinful likewise when it lasts too long. If right in itself, yet if it require no satisfaction but the repentance of the offending party, it must not continue beyond it; for that which we expect should turn away the Lord's anger from us, should turn away ours from others. And where satisfaction is necessary, it must not abide after it is made or offered; for as that takes away the cause, the effect should cease. Much less must it continue after the punishment of the offender; as that argues an evil mind, that seeks farther revenge than is due to the measure of the offence, and turns an innocent resentment into malignity and malice: And, therefore, the apostle, after commanding to *be angry and sin not*, adds, *let not the sun go down upon your wrath*; intimating, that we must not retain

our anger too long, if we would keep it innocent. Thus charity is not highly provoked.

Now among the many excellent effects of this virtue of charity, are these; it makes us easy in ourselves, and to others; and gives us the enjoyment of what we have, which the angry man hath not; hence, it is said, *blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* It is likewise honourable, it being a nobler victory to conquer our passion, than to be conquered by it; for he that subdues his own spirit, and keeps it in proper subordination to reason and religion, is greater than he that taketh a city. Moreover, to revenge an injury, is to act the part of an executioner; but to remit it, is to personate a prince, whose prerogative it is to pardon.

But notwithstanding that the fruit of this property of charity is easy, eligible, and advantageous; yet, a righteous resentment is necessary: For, had Eli been more severe with his sons, it is probable he had prevented much evil, preserved their lives, and perpetuated the priesthood in his house. The want of righteous anger then, as clearly indicates the being defective in charity, as the possession of unrighteous anger. Nor can any thing, ultimately, produce more dreadful effects; for he that does not resent unrighteousness, will suffer it; and he that suffereth sin upon his brother, hateth him; and he that hateth him, is a murderer.

Thinketh no evil. From that act of charity which governs the passions, I proceed to that which respects the thoughts.

The original is *ou logizetai to kakan*; where *logizetai* signifies not only to think, but to design and contrive; and *kakan* denotes evil, not only as it is taken for sin, but as it implies mischief, and all manner of hurt to another; so that this is that property

property of charity, which restrains men from hurting their neighbours.

Yet when charity is said to think no evil, it is not to be understood that it does not think of evil things. It certainly may, and must, in order to understand and avoid them; for as the Almighty beholds the evil and the good, to punish the one, and to reward the other; so may charitable men think on both, to hate the one, and to love the other: Therefore all thinking of evil is not inconsistent with charity. The sense then is, that it doth not think evil of others.

The word *logizetai* signifies also to reckon, account, or impute any thing to another; and, therefore *logizetai* here, is the same as *logizetai amartian* elsewhere, to impute sin or unrighteousness to another. Now charity does not easily impute evil to its neighbour; it is contrary to its nature to act in opposition; it would bless all, but curse none. Hence the good that he doth, it willingly ascribes to him for his honour and reward, but the evil which he is guilty of, it reluctantly charges him with: for love finds no pleasure in imputing what it cannot deny. Much less will it think evil where there is a possibility of thinking otherwise. Whatever will admit of a just excuse, charity will avail itself of. And where the evil cannot be justly excused; yet if it may be extenuated, love will lay hold of it; for it does not put the worst construction upon others actions, but takes every thing in the best sense. Neither is love suspicious, it does not think evil where it does not appear; it tears up root and branch, all imagining of what there is neither proof nor appearance.

Neither does charity do any evil to another; it neither injures his soul, body, name, nor estate. It does not willingly grieve his soul. *By sorrow of heart, saith Solomon, the spirit is broken; therefore*

he that causelessly disquieteth his neighbour, wounds his soul, and is so far void of affection for him. Much less by inticing or exciting him to sin; for this makes a more deadly wound than the other, and is the greatest of injuries. Neither does it hurt his *body*, by murder, maiming, or other acts of violence; yea, rather, it suppresseth all thoughts of unkindness and revenge, which are so directly contrary to, and inconsistent with, the love we owe to ourselves and others. Nor injures his *character*, by public slanders and calumnies, which are the arrows that fly by day, or by secret whispers and back-bitings, the pestilence that walketh by night, and wounds without being seen. Nor his *estate*, by robbing, defrauding, over-reaching, oppressing, with-holding due debts, the labourer's hire, breaches of promise, betraying of trust, or by any other act of injustice; rather, love teaches us to do as we would be done to; and, therefore, not only preserves us from plundering and purloining, but also from coveting and desiring what is another's. Thus charity thinketh no evil.

Moreover, charity thinketh good. It sympathizeth with the sorrowful; pities the sick and afflicted; and is ready to deliver from danger and out of distress. Contributes to the necessitous, by feeding the poor, cloathing the naked, and in every other way according to their wants and its ability. It helps their reputation, by clearing the innocent of evil reports, and by spreading the honour of such as do well. Thus this god-like grace does nothing ill, and all things well. In which, how excellently does it imitate the Almighty in the things which are his greatest excellencies, and which most distinguish him from sinners and satan. Happy then, unspeakably happy are they who are endowed with this divine grace of charity! It is heaven-born! heaven-resembling! and heaven-tending!

tending ! who would not then be filled with it ? For, alas ! all beside is but earthly, sensual, and devilish ! Imbibe then, imbibe the Spirit of Jesus ; for this is the root of that. Get his mind, and love and live like him ; think no evil, and do good.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity. From that property of charity which restrains from thinking evil, the Apostle proceeds to that which rejoiceth not in it.

The original is *adikia*, and signifies deceit and falshood, as the contrary of right, sincerity, and justice ; so it is taken, (John vii. 18.) where it is said, that there is no unrighteousness, that is, no deceitfulness or guile in him. But both iniquity in English, and *adikia* in Greek, are sometimes taken in a larger sense, viz. for all sorts of sin and wickedness, which are always so many acts of injustice against God and ourselves, and often against our neighbour ; for we never omit any thing which we ought to do, nor commit any thing which we should leave undone, but we fail of our duty, and prove false to our Maker ; so that every sin is a piece of iniquity against God, &c. And if we break not only the laws of God, but also of our country, by invading the rights of others, we become doubly unjust, by adding to iniquity against God, injury and deceit to men. And, by both, we deceive and destroy ourselves.

But what is it to rejoice in iniquity ? Joy is the reviving and cheering of the spirits, upon the doing or thinking of an agreeable action. And to rejoice in iniquity, is to be pleased and delighted with the performance of it, in ourselves, or others. Now some openly act, and boast of their iniquities ; they declare their sins as Sodom, and hide them not ; applauding their vices, and themselves for the sake of them, and take not only a pleasure, but a pride, in rehearsing them. Yea, some are arrived to that degree

degree of love to and delight in sin, that they boast of more than they have committed; as if it added to their honour to increase their evils, and that they would raise their glory by the number and the nature of their crimes.—There are others who practice their sins more privately, but with as much delight and satisfaction as the former: And these, though sinning with more art and caution; yet while they retain a liking to their sins, may be said to rejoice in them.

But beside such as rejoice in their own iniquity, there are some who rejoice in the iniquities of others. All who allure others to commit evil are of this order; for none will intice another to do that which they have not some liking to themselves; he that loves virtue, will not tempt another to vice. Again, all who delight in the company of loose, prophane, and debauched persons, come under the character of those who rejoice in the iniquity of others; inasmuch as their company would not be sought, nor their conversation and conduct be agreeable, if they did not find pleasure in their ways.

There is likewise a sort of superannuated sinners, who being incapable of committing sins themselves, delight to see or hear of them in others; they will be spectators when they cannot be actors. Yea, in themselves, they supply the impotence of action by fancy or speculation; their delight in thinking and talking of their former sins, shews they retain their affection for them; and if age or infirmities have rendered them incapable of committing them, it is not that they have forsaken their sins, but their sins have forsaken them. In a word, all who continue in their sins, and all who countenance them in others, are of those who rejoice in iniquity.

Now charity, which is the love of God, our neighbour, and ourselves, effectually cures this evil;

evil; for, instead of rejoicing in iniquity, it renders it the object of utter detestation.

That branch of it which consists in the love of God, inclines us to hate whatever is abhorant to him; and inasmuch as all iniquity is so, it rejoiceth not in it; rather, it sets the soul against it, and treats it as that which is both dishonourable and displeasing to him.

Charity too, as it respects our neighbour, disposes its possessor to depart from every thing that is hurtful to him; and as all deceit, detraction, frauds, injustice, picking, stealing, &c. have an evil influence on his welfare, it disinclines us to delight in such diabolical and destructive deeds.

And, as it concerns ourselves, it teaches us to know, and incites us to abstain from whatever is dangerous and detrimental to body and soul; and because intemperance, impatience, and every other evil is prejudicial to peace and prosperity, to salvation here and hereafter, it wills us not to follow, but forsake them.—This is the way of charity; for it has no pleasure in unrighteousness. Yea, as a grace residing in the soul, it is at utter enmity with every evil; and as exercised on its proper objects, it is inconsistent both with the practice and pleasure of sin: Therefore it rejoiceth not in iniquity, whether practised by its possessors or others. Rather, as Lot's righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, and as Moses preferred affliction with the people of God, before the pleasures of sin for a season; so charity rejoiceth not in iniquity.

But rejoiceth in the truth. Charity, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, rejoiceth in the truth. Truth (*aletheia*) is sometimes opposed to error; and then it signifies the agreeableness of our apprehensions with the nature of things. It is also opposed to lying; in which sense it denotes the correspondence

respondence of our words and promises with the sentiments and purposes of our souls. It is likewise opposed to hypocrisy; and imports a consistency betwixt practices and professions.

But truth is sometimes taken in a larger sense; in which it is the same as religion itself; which, in scripture, is often stiled *the truth*; as implying our being true to God, in rendering him that duty and homage, fear and reverence, worship and service, which we owe him; that love, justice, and all other good offices to our neighbour, which are due to him; and that temperance, sobriety, and whatever else that is necessary for the well-being of our own souls and bodies. In short, it is the whole system of divinity, containing the precepts, promises, and threatnings of the divine law, on the Lord's part; with all that is required from men, in respect of God, their neighbours, and themselves.

But what is it to rejoice in the truth? To rejoice in the truth, is to pursue and embrace it with delight, and to behold it with complacency, both in ourselves and others.

First, to rejoice in it in opposition to error. Truth is sometimes so entangled with error, that weak, though well-meaning men, cannot easily discern the one from the other: Therefore to be willing to be informed, and to be ready to receive it when discovered, is to rejoice in it.—And as truth stands opposed to lying and falshood, to rejoice in it is to delight to speak and to hear it. Some to escape evil, and others to obtain good, will utter what they know to be false; they make lies their refuge, and find profit or pleasure in unrighteousness. But to rejoice in the truth, is to hate the way of lying, and the wages of unrighteousness, and never to have recourse to it to help either ourselves or others, but to do and delight in speaking the truth from the heart.—Again, as truth
stands

stands in opposition to hypocrisy and double-dealing; to rejoice in it, is to delight in sincerity of soul, and to find pleasure in words and works, both in ourselves and others, when they perfectly agree with professions and the truth and justice of God. Yea, to rejoice in the truth, is to find pleasure in all that is pleasing to God, profitable to others, and ourselves; to live in a cheerful discharge of our duty, and to be glad to see others do so also.

By charity men rejoice in the truth, it being that excellent grace which disposes them not only to do and delight in well-doing as it concerns themselves, but also to find pleasure in them that do. The love we have to the Lord, will make us rejoice in whatever tends to promote his praise. The love likewise which we have for our neighbour, makes us rejoice in the truth as it concerns him. How agreeable to, and how great is the rejoicing of charity, when those who have erred from the right way, are recovered to it; when the prodigal is returned, or the lost sheep is found. Herein the lover of mankind imitates the angels, who rejoice at the repentance and conversion of a sinner. And a true love for ourselves will make us rejoice in what is most for our present spiritual, and future eternal happiness. Now truth, in all the particulars of it, is that; nothing is so conducive to man's advantage as to live in a perpetual discharge of his duty to God, his neighbour, and himself. For as he that is a foe to God, is not a true friend to man; so he that sins against both, wrongs his own soul. And the joy that springs from truth is alone lasting and permanent. The pleasures of sin are but for a season; and the joy of the wicked is mixed with sorrow, and will soon end in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Great then is the truth, and greatly to be rejoiced in. It has God for its author and end, it
flows

flows from and tends to him; he forms the principle of it in the heart by the spirit of truth, and the practice of it in the life is according to the law of truth. Hence by the one, and in the way of the other, he is worshipped and glorified. Love delights, yea, rejoices in this; with heart and with voice it loudly proclaims the truth and justice of God, so apparent in all his proceedings. It exults also when truth prospers in the world; when, instead of errors, falsehoods, and insincerity; knowledge, honour, and honesty prevail in the principles and practices of men. These objects are amiable in the eyes of charity; with rapturous delight she beholds them.

Beareth all things. Charity wills us, according to the last particulars of it, to be affected with vice and virtue, to hate the one and love the other, and that both in ourselves and others; agreeable to that advice, *abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.*

But because all sins are not of the same sort and degree, and that there is a much greater heinousness and guilt in some than in others, charity obliges us to be differently affected toward them; which is intimated by this property of it, *beareth all things*. In the original it is *panta segei*, which signifies to bear with, cover and excuse all things as far as we can; and is opposed to censuring, divulging, and aggravating others failings.

Now all sin is the transgression of the law, either by omitting what it requires, or committing what it forbids. And yet all sins are not equally heinous, nor carry in them the same degree of guilt, but admit of deductions or aggravations, according to the several circumstances that attend the committing of them; which proceed, partly from the clearness or dimness of the light in which they are done. So sins against knowledge have a deeper dye, than those

those which are done in ignorance. And sins that proceed from ignorance, occasioned by the neglect or contempt of knowledge, are much greater than such as spring from an ignorance which is unavoidable. Hence, the Apostle says, in the case of some, that God *winked* at their sins, as being committed in a time of ignorance; and of others, he adds, that they were without *excuse*.

But the greater or less degree of guilt, proceeds principally from the degree of consent, in committing sin. So he that falls into sin by surprize, or inadvertance, or through fear, or is enticed by strong temptation, is less guilty than he who does the same things upon deliberation and choice. And generally, the more voluntary any sin is, the greater is its guilt.

Now sins, in general, have some degree of ignorance and infirmity as their cause. Hence they are remittable; which they would not be, if wholly wilful. Of this the Almighty, by his long-suffering, gives a sufficient proof; he spares from punishment, and is free to forgive when ever they repent and reform, and have an affiance in his mercy through the merit of his Son. Our Saviour, also, has left us an admirable example, in imputing it to the ignorance of two of his disciples, who were for calling fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, by saying, that they *did not know what manner of spirit they were of*. Likewise when two other disciples were desired to watch with him; and, instead of that, sunk into sleep, he imputes it to no worse a cause than weakness, saying, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*. And when the Jews with loud clamour and cruel hands had brought him to the cross, he cried, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*.

In imitation of which, charity, which is a god-like grace, is said to bear, or cover all things. It

is not forward to publish the faults of others, unless where the service of the public, and the reformation of the party, make it necessary : It finds no pleasure in reporting their failings to their disparagement, or prejudice ; but rather, on the contrary, it casts a vail over them : It does not aggravate, or make the worst of a bad matter, but gives all the allowance it consistently can. It will not find fault where there is none ; nor heighten it where it is, either by adding any circumstance to increase the guilt, or by concealing any that may diminish it ; but weighs and judges all things by the favourable measures of equity and candour. Charity will not ascribe that to wilfulness and presumption, which is done unwillingly ; nor impute to deliberation and design, that which comes by surprize, and without intention. In a word, charity covereth a multitude of sins. And this is so common in cases of a sublunary sort, that it is but seldom separate from them. How willing are most to hide the faults of them they favour. Now religious love extends this to all men, foes as well as friends, bearing with their infirmities and failings, and forgiving and forgetting them when repented of and reformed.

Thus charity imitates the Almighty, who beareth with the rebellious, and with the mantle of his mercy so covers their sins as not presently to punish them, but waits for their repentance, that he may pardon and bless them ; and when their persisting in sin renders that impossible, yet hath he no pleasure in their punishment.—Let us then learn to cover or excuse, as far as we can, the failings of one another. This is what we hope for, when our own case requires it, from the Lord. And if we expect this favourable dealing from him, we must do the same to our fellows, otherwise we shall have judgment without mercy : A measure, which not many, are able to support.

Believeth

Believeth all things. Charity, which beareth or covereth the faults and infirmities of all as far as it can, believeth all that may commend or excuse them.

Now *panta piseuci*, signifies a willingness to hear and believe the best of others, where there is no apparent reason to the contrary. And if any thing that is wrong be reported of them, charity is willing to hear and believe all that may be said, in excuse or mitigation of it; for, as it is one property of the wisdom which is from above, that it is easy to be intreated, so is it of charity, to believe any good of another, and to hearken to all that may be alledged to lessen or to alleviate a fault.

Charity, indeed, does not will us to call evil good; to commend any one falsely, or to give encouragement to vice, by a too easy and candid representation of it; nor makes us unwilling to rebuke and warn them that sin; nor keeps us from exposing them when it is for their own or other's profit: it will not falsify to befriend any, nor conceal the truth which should be known: But it obliges us to give the most favourable character of all men; and to represent all things, as much to their advantage as we can consistent with a good conscience.

Moreover, where any thing admits of a double meaning, the one good, and the other bad; charity obliges us to take the best. It was the observation of a wise Heathen, that many things have two handles, and that malice and envy commonly take hold of the worst and weakest, but virtue and goodness always make the best of a bad matter; it believes the best it can of every one, and puts the best construction upon every thing, it will admit of; it believes all things probable, and possible, and gives all the credit and allowance, that consist with sincerity and truth.

And that this is a property of charity, is evident from the nature of the thing. Love to mankind will naturally dispose us to believe all the good we can of them. 'Tis a saying, grounded upon long observation, That men easily believe what they wish to be true; and, therefore, charity being a well-wishing to all men, it necessarily disposes us to believe well of them.

Now the want of this charity is the principal cause of the contentions that are in the world; for whilst men interpret the words and works of others in the worst sense, being loath to believe any good, and forward to believe all evil of them; it is no wonder if they entertain hard thoughts, and utter evil speeches of one another; and yet this is the way of many, who, instead of laying hold on what may be for the credit and advantage of another, will be sure to fasten on some thing that may tend to his detriment and dishonour, and thereby grieve those with their censures, whom they should relieve with their charity.

But, if the contrary of this were cultivated, if the grace of charity were more exercised, how much would it conduce to the ease and comfort of mankind! The angels at the birth of Christ, next to the glory of God, proclaimed peace on earth, and good-will towards men. And Christ came into the world to plant virtue among men both by his spirit, doctrine, and example. Hence he has given many commands to bear with, forgive, and be kindly affectioned one to another. And what an unparalleled pattern hath he left of these things! Particularly in the charity that consists in concealing evil and commending good. Where he found any measure of faith in, or love to him, he always accepted and commended it; and for the sake of that, overlooked many miscarriages. Yea, where he found nothing of either, he forgave the greatest injuries, and prayed
for

for his bitterest enemies: He ever put the best construction upon all things, that were for, or against him.

Now how easy might men live by one another, if this piece of charity were frequently practiced? The world would then be full of quiet habitations; and men, instead of troubling and censuring, would be a help and comfort to one another; peace and unanimity would prevail, and heaven would be on earth. But, alas! while the hearts of men are unholy; while a sinful selfish spirit possesseth them; good-will, brotherly kindness, pleasure in passing by offences, and believing the best, are not to be expected from them; brambles do not bear olive berries, nor thistles figs. Nor can any human means, without the help of the Holy Ghost, ever bring such un sanctified souls into a condition capable of doing better. Whoever then would love, in a religious sense, must imbibe a better disposition; must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, by the renewing of his mind; for that only can produce genuine charity. Nor is any motive wanting to induce to this. Man's wants call loudly for it; without it he cannot serve God in any, and sins against him in every thing, and is every moment in danger of being damned. This is the picture of earth's happiest man, without charity. What then are emperors, kings, nobles, and all inferior orders of men without this? Alas! *he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.* He that, from the likeness of God, does not love him; hath the likeness of the devil, and hateth him: *For the carnal mind is enmity against him.* O unholy and unhappy wretches! It is not in words to paint them. Diabolical souls, haters of God, children of the devil, servants of sin, lovers of the world, and heirs of damnation. These should induce to seek for charity. Other motives are, Christ has procured it, God has promised it,

and the Holy Ghost will reveal it. The way to find it is easy and infallible; faith and prayer will bring it from heaven: for God giveth his Holy Spirit to all that ask.

Hopeth all things. Having spoken of that property of charity which believeth all things, I proceed to that which hopeth all things. Now *panta elpizei*, implies such a desire of good things for others, as is accompanied with some ground to expect them.

Hope is a passion of the soul, which inclines it to desire and endeavour after some possible and absent good. I call it a passion, because it springs from an inward principle. It is likewise an act of the rational soul, inasmuch as it supposes knowledge; for none can hope for what he knows not.

The object of hope is something good in itself, or supposed to be so; as evils are rather feared than hoped. It is also something possible, or so apprehended to be; impossibilities being the objects of despair. It is likewise something absent and future; for none hopes for things past or present. It is accompanied too with desire; in that where there is no desire, there is no hope. Moreover, desire must produce endeavour; or it is not hope, but presumption.

Now the first and principal ground of hope, is the goodness of God; that goodness which he granted to men in the gift of his Son; for *he was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses*. The second and less principal ground, is the promise of pardon, holiness, and heaven, and whatever else that is necessary to be received.

These foundations are firm, and fully to be depended on, especially while the day of grace endures; and that being a secret which none but the Lord can be sensible of; therefore though there may

may be signs of some being given up to a reprobate sense ; yet as the precise time cannot be ascertained, it may be asserted, that while there is life there is hope.

Now charity builds on this ground, raises a structure of hope on the possibility of sinners being saved. Hence, though at present their condition is bad, and affords no probable prospect of future prosperity ; it hopes, that in time, it will be made better. And herein charity is much helped by the consideration of persons whose case afforded no probable appearance of good ; and yet notwithstanding of notorious sinners became eminent saints. Manassah, Mary Magdalene, Saul, &c. were such as gave no signs of a sudden and a great salvation ; and yet they were so saved. Hence, charity hopes, that what has been, will be again ; and that what may be done to some, may be done to others, and to all ; therefore though it has not a probable, yet it has a possible ground of hope concerning the salvation of every sinner.

And upon the same ground, where there is any appearance of good, charity builds a higher hope ; for by how much the heart is already renewed, by so much is hope increased. So upon this double ground, it hopes, that notwithstanding present imperfections, impediments, and oppositions, he who hath begun a good work, and whose wisdom, goodness, truth, and justice are concerned in the accomplishing of it, will carry it on.

Yea, in times of declension, when things run the wrong way ; when instead of persevering and pressing on to the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus, they grow weary with well-doing, and turn to a sinful course ; charity hopes, that they will either turn before their good disposition and desire are entirely gone, or that the Lord will afterwards renew them again to repentance.

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And in the case of an accusation, when a person's present goodness is so precarious as that faith can find but little footing; yet charity hopeth that things are not so bad, but that something may be discovered, to turn the scale in his favour; or, if that cannot be, it hopes that some circumstance will be found to mitigate the matter, that what cannot be denied may be extenuated. In short, charity hopeth all things that God hath promised; and teaches us to wait the accomplishing of them, both to ourselves and others. And thus it forbids us to give up any for lost, or to despair of the repentance and amendment of the greatest sinners; for not only such have been saved, but even the thief upon the cross, in the last day of his life, repented, believed, was forgiven, renewed, and received into paradise. And though this be no encouragement to continue in sin, yet it is a foundation whereon to build the hope of a possible repentance in the most apparently unpromising condition; and, therefore, charity will not suffer us to despair, while there is a possibility of salvation.

It remains then that we observe and practice this duty of charity; placing our hope in God, which is the anchor of the soul; and which, if fixed upon him, will keep us from fluctuating, and make us firm in the expectation of receiving his blessing. But our endeavours, especially for things which depend on a condition to be done, must keep pace with our hopes; for he that expects to see the goodness of God, must wait in the appointed way. Nor can any fail of finding it, but through want of so doing. The Lord cannot lie; consequently, he will give agreeable to his promise. Why then does not every one receive a full salvation? The answer is, they have not because they ask not, or because they ask amiss; they will not be at the pains so to seek as to find: for every one that seeketh (aright) findeth.

findeth. No other reason need be assigned why hopes are not realized in the gift of such mercies and graces as completely save from sin, fully qualify to serve the Lord, and habitually prepare for heaven. But let us now hope in the Lord, and earnestly contend for, and patiently wait to receive his blessing; that being enriched with heavenly things, our hope may be full of immortality. Let us likewise hope the best concerning others, and be moved thereby to contribute whatever we can to make them partakers of the things hoped for.

Endureth all things. This is the last, though not the least, property of charity. The apostle, in the description of this excellent grace, begins it with, *suffereth long*; continues it with, *beareth all things*; and concludes it with, *endureth all things*: to intimate, that the whole course of Christianity is one continued scene of suffering.

The original is *panta upomenei*, and signifies not only patience, but perseverance also, a going on with courage and constancy, both in doing good and suffering evil, not fainting in our Christian course, but holding out to the end, whatever difficulties we may meet with.

And that troubles and difficulties attend the course of Christianity, is a truth so well known by experience, as to need no other proof: *Many are the troubles of the righteous: In the world ye shall have tribulation: And, if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution.*

The way of virtue is so contrary to that of the world, that it is no wonder if men meet with difficulties in it. And if there were no other trials and temptations, a large degree of patience to sustain them, would be necessary. But beside the common difficulties to be contended with, as the consequence of that contrariety; there may sometimes be a call to take up the cross, and to follow Christ in the deep
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and dark ways of suffering, which will endanger both person and property, as well as put to the proof all our patience, courage, and constancy.

And that these are an indirect cause of the inconstancy so common, is evident. Some followed our Saviour for loaves; they were his friends while he continued to feed and favour them; but when *persecution arose by reason of the word*, they were offended; they could walk with him in the sunshine of prosperity, but when the clouds began to gather and threaten a storm, they left him. Nor is it now less common than then, to desert Christ on account of his cross. No real objection can be made to genuine Christianity, considered in itself; but, on the contrary, it is calculated to cure man of all his disorders, to deliver him from all the evils of his understanding, will, and affections, and thereby to constitute him holy and happy for ever. That then which prevents many from embracing, and others from continuing in it is, that it obliges them to observe such a method of living, as exposes them to the ridicule of irreligious men: for, because they do not run to the same excess of riot, they speak evil of them. And that which hinders others from continuing is, that it subjects them to such mortifications of body in the self-denials of its senses and appetites, and restraints in governing the tempers and affections of the soul, that while, through grace, they are contracting new habits in respect of the one, and a new disposition in regard of the other, is a burden not easy to be borne; and, therefore, they grow weary of the cross, and cast it off. Christianity likewise obliges them to sympathize with, and to bear the burdens of their brethren in tribulation; to take part with the oppressed, and to relieve the distressed, &c. Hence, whoever would be truly religious, must be so in opposition to all that the world, the flesh, and the devil can do.

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And these being partly contrary thereto, and partly oppressive; without a principle naturally calculated to counteract and continue the opposition, aided by resolution, exertion, and perseverance, the affection for that which is good will fail, and the body will sink for want of an inward support; the fear of man, shame, and other evils will enter; and, instead of continuing, the contest will be given up: Such will recede from the way of salvation.

But charity, which endureth all things, is the best remedy for this inconstancy; for it adds strength and stability to the mind, and enables it both to encounter and overcome the greatest difficulties; it keeps it firm to all parts of duty in the worst times, and fortifies it against all discouragements and temptations to the contrary. This will be evident, by considering the three great branches of this virtue, viz. as it comprehends the love of God, our neighbour, and ourselves; in all which we shall stand firm and unmoveable upon the centre of charity.

The love of God will enable us to endure all things, that may tend to promote his glory, and prevent his dishonour. Love is a strong passion, and stops at nothing to please and enjoy the beloved object. And when it is fixed on God, the highest, best, and noblest object, it will make all duties pleasant, and all difficulties easy. Yea, nothing is too great for it to undertake, and nothing too hard to undergo; it is so far from shrinking in a good cause, that it flies to it, and triumphs over the malice of the most cruel persecutors. The apostles thanked God that they were accounted worthy to suffer for him. The primitive Christians gloried in the cross, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. And many, in modern times, by the help of his grace, freely sacrificed their lives in the cause

cause of truth, that they might do their duty to, and not dishonour their God.

Charity, likewise, as it signifies the love of our neighbour, endureth all things; for it will not grow weary with well doing, but will persevere and think nothing too great to be done for their good. No ingratitude or unworthy returns, will make charitable men repent of the good they have done; but, on the contrary, they will continue to cast coals of kindness upon them, and seek to overcome evil with good. Love will pardon and pass by many indignities, rather than they should fall into greater mischief, through its neglect; and will endure any temporal evil, to prevent another's eternal misery: It will spare no pains to reclaim a sinner from the error of his ways. In a word, lovers of mankind neglect no means, nor omit any opportunity, but willingly deny themselves of ease, pleasure, and profit, for the good of others; for charity endureth all things.

That branch of charity also, which relates to ourselves, teaches us to endure any thing here, for eternal happiness hereafter; it will not suffer us to shrink from our duty for fear of affliction, or to hazard our souls through too much tenderness to our bodies; knowing *that these light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* This grace helps us to look *not so much at the things that are seen, which are temporal, as at the things that are not seen, which are eternal.* And as much as a moment comes short of eternity, so far are the transitory evils of this life exceeded by the never fading glories of the next; for which reason the apostle reckoned, *that the sufferings of this present life are not to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed in us.* The worldling, indeed, and the sensualist, who look no farther than this world, are so wholly taken up with the softness and

and vanities of it, that they will endure no hardship, and thereby rashly expose themselves to all the miseries of another life, to avoid a few difficulties in this. These mistake their true interest and happiness; fondly preferring vain transitory pleasures, above lasting and substantial joys, and pursue the trifles of time, and totally neglect the weighty matters of eternity. But charity will help us, *rather to chuse to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of the world.*

Hence, in respect of the whole, charity is constant, and can endure the sharpest trials; 'tis not like the slight friendship of this world, fickle and uncertain, that varies with the wind, and is shaken with every blast; but like the poles of the earth, that remain stedfast and unmoveable. Thus it teaches us to endure all things for the sake of Christ, and to adhere to our duty with an unshaken firmness and constancy of mind. Let us then, as good stewards of this grace, endure hardness, and persevere to the end in the love of God, our neighbour, and ourselves. This will make us ornamental to our profession; shew, that it was not for loaves, but for love, that we commenced and continued followers of Christ. And, notwithstanding, that a martyr's crown may not be the consequence; yet it may rank us among the glorious company of confessors, and raise us higher in heaven.

V. 8. *Charity never faileth: But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.* The apostle in the four foregoing verses, having described the nature of charity; here resumes his subject, and goes on to set forth its excellency. In the three first verses, he prefers it above all the gifts of the spirit, in respect of the

usefulness of it; shewing that the gift of tongues, of prophecy, of knowledge, of faith, of feeding the poor, and of giving the body to be burnt, without it, profiteth nothing.

In the following words, he farther shews its excellency, both from the perpetual duration of it, and from the transitory nature of all other things: *charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, &c. they shall vanish away.*

The worth and excellency of things, are generally estimated by the duration of them: Those which are of a permanent nature, are prized proportionably; and such as soon decay, are less esteemed. Now by this rule, the grace of charity will be found to exceed all other excellencies; for it never fails to assist, encourage, and comfort us in this world, and will accompany to, and crown us with endless glory in that which is to come.

Charity never faileth in this life; inasmuch as it assists in *suffering long* the evils and oppositions of men, with a patience and peace that is far more profitable and pleasant than the avenging them could be; in being *kind*, to the evil and unthankful, by returning them blessing for cursing, and good for evil; by preserving from *envy*, and causing us to share in the comforts of another's consolation; in suppressing all that pride and *vanity* which make men uneasy both to themselves and others; in checking all unseemly, selfish, and passionate behaviour, and putting a decency into our words and actions, which is both graceful in itself, and useful to others; and by *believing*, *hoping*, and *thinking* the best of all men, it endureth all things, and comes off more than a conqueror.

But tho' the several branches of charity be of great use, and afford the most excellent and durable satisfaction in the world; yet the never failing excellency of it will be best seen in the world to come,
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for it will accompany us to heaven, and be a source of satisfaction there; and, forasmuch as it will never fail, it will perpetuate and make our pleasures run parallel with the ages of eternity. Seeing then that charity will not cease; this is an excellency with which all earthly things cannot compare; for the wealth, honours, and pleasures of this world are fleeting and momentary; they seldom are constant enough to continue with us till we die; but if they do, then we must part, and bid them adieu for ever; beyond that bound they cannot go. But charity goes farther, and leads us into the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

And as charity will accompany us to the other world, so will it constitute the principal part of our happiness; for heaven is not so much a place, as a state consisting in the perfection of a pure nature. The happiness of God, is in the infinite perfection of his purity; and, therefore, the more we participate of those perfections, the greater degree of happiness we attain to. Now there is nothing that gives us so near an approach to, and resemblance of God, as the grace of charity; *for God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* By this we become like him, being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; from grace to glory, which differ not in kind but degree. When we begin to love God, and our neighbour for his sake, then does our heaven on earth begin; when we grow in grace, we approach nearer to God, and gradually advance to the heavenly state, where charity will burn with a pure, strong, and constant flame; for it will be the inseparable glory of the saints to love for ever without decay. Thus charity never faileth.

But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether
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there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. The apostle here takes no notice of the riches, honours, powers, and pleasures of the world, being all too poor and perishing to be compared with this excellent grace. The most specious accomplishments on this side religion, are the gifts of the spirit, and the natural and acquired ornaments of the mind; and yet these come infinitely short of the dignity and duration of charity.

Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Prophecy, whether predicting future things or expounding the scriptures, is a gift of great use to mankind; but it is not calculated for continuance; it terminates in time; and often expires before the lamp of life goes out. We are told, indeed, that some at the last day, will say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, &c.* But where charity is wanting, it will neither gain reputation, nor reward; and if they have nothing else to plead, they will be excluded as workers of iniquity. Prophecies then will fail.

Whether there be tongues, they shall cease. The gift of tongues was necessary in the beginning of christianity, for propagating the gospel to men of different nations and languages; for without them the apostles could not have taught, nor the people have learnt. And these, for understanding the original scriptures, &c. are still necessary; and the eloquence and ornaments of language are likewise useful to promote the belief of the truth, and persuade to the practice of it. But how useful soever this diversity of tongues, &c. is in this life, they will soon cease, and be lost in eternal silence. Death will seal up the speaker's lips, and his language will for ever fail. In the grave there will be no voice; their languages which cost infinite care and labour to learn, and which perhaps were the pride of the speakers, will be heard no more.

In heaven one language will prevail among all its inhabitants; and, probably one that was never heard on earth. Hence then as there will be no need, so there will be no use of diversity of languages, and different dialects. Therefore tongues will cease and be for ever silent.

Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. By knowledge here, we are not to understand the knowledge of God and divine things; for this is a part of the happiness of heaven, where it will improve to perfection: *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Yea, this is contained in, and must continue with charity: For we cannot love God, without knowing him; and as we advance in the love of him, we shall in the knowledge of him: So that this divine knowledge will not pass away, but improve till it arrive to its utmost height in heaven.

But the knowledge here intended, is of a sublunary sort; the knowledge of arts and sciences, worldly wisdom, human learning, &c. which being suited to, will vanish with the present state of things. The knowledge which concerns the earth, can have no place in heaven. Therefore though it is necessary for this life, and may afford some satisfaction to the rational soul; yet in heaven we shall be far advanced above earthly things; and as there will be no need, so there will be no relish of them. There we shall have sublimer truths to contemplate, and purer joys to taste; we shall behold the brightness of the Lord, the wonders of that spiritual world, and whatever else we are capable of, with ease, or with intuition.

In a word, we shall there be advanced to the highest form in the knowledge of God, and the things that concern us; and then all our earthly knowledge will be forgotten, and our imperfect knowledge of divine things so swallowed up in the more perfect

fight and sense of them, as, in effect, to be no more. Thus charity, which never faileth, excells all the gifts of the spirit, which soon see an end.

This then should teach us to prize this noble grace of charity, this pearl of great prize, which is worth the parting with all we have to purchase; for it will abide with us when all other things abandon us, and will be not only a support and satisfaction to our souls here, but a portion and comfort hereafter: and, therefore, tho' we may now covet and labour for some of the most necessary gifts, yet we should chiefly mind the more excellent way, and walk in it, that we may for ever find rest to our souls. From hence let us likewise learn, not to pride ourselves in any of these spiritual gifts, for they will soon be gone; and it is no better than the folly of children to please ourselves with what looks gay, but will soon vanish away. And as gifts will soon cease, let us put them to the best use while we have them; let us use them to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. In this way they will turn to a good account, will be of exceeding great service to us when they are gone, in the rewards which we shall receive in eternity, for the right use of them in time. Wise and happy then is that man, who contributes all that he can, to spread the knowledge and honour of the Lord in the world, and to bring lost sinners to their senses, their Saviour, and eternal salvation! This labour of love, the Lord will not overlook, but will reveal and reward in the last day. Blessed is the man whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing!—Now this is a lesson which all lovers of mankind who can contribute to the salutary purpose of saving souls, should willingly learn; in particular, all public dispensers of the word of God; for no act of charity is comparable to that which conduces to convince and convert the igno-

rant and erring children of men. The fruit of these labours, if succeeded with salvation, will be found in the rapturous joy of those on whom they were wrought; and if not so succeeded, they will redound to the eternal excellence of the labourer; for every wise, well-intended, and faithfully executed design, will meet with the divine approbation and blessing. Who then would not labour to turn many to righteousness, that he may shine as the stars for ever!

V. 9, 10, 11, 12. *For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know as I am known.* These words are intended to confirm the truth of what went before. In the preceeding verse he had asserted the duration of charity, and the short continuance of all spiritual gifts; and for a proof of both, he adds, *For we know in part; and we prophecy in part; and see through a glass darkly, &c.* where he uses a double argument to prove his assertion.

The first is taken from the imperfection of spiritual gifts, which being inconsistent with the state of heaven, will be done away when we come thither; for here we know and prophecy but in part, by reason of which, he compares our present condition with the state of minority in natural life; when I was a child, I spake, understood, and thought as a child.—His second assertion, is grounded upon the different way of discerning spiritual objects, here and hereafter. *Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.* Here we cannot have a direct and immediate sight of divine objects,
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but only some images and faint representations of them : for, *Radius reflexus languit*, the glass returns not the object itself, but only the shadow and resemblance of it. From which he infers, that when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part will be done away ; our imperfect gifts, fight, &c. will give place to a more perfect state.

The first glass in which the Lord and divine things may be seen, is the world ; the heavens declare his glory, and the earth sheweth his handy work : The invisible things of him, even his eternal power and godhead, being clearly seen, by the things which appear. The heathen could see the Lord in this glass, the image and representation of him being thereby scattered every where. But as they, so we see him therein but darkly ; for though some of his attributes, viz. his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness shine conspicuously ; yet of his mercy, justice, love to man through Christ, &c. there is not the least sign ; so that this is but a dark and imperfect vision.

The second glass, is the word. But in this we discern but darkly, compared with that brighter manifestation, which will be made hereafter. The discoveries of Moses and the prophets, concerning a Saviour, were but dark and enigmatical, veiled with types and shadows. And even under the gospel, where these shadows are done away, the apostle confesses, that we see but darkly. Nor indeed, does the scripture, notwithstanding its brightness compared with the creation, convey more than a dark discovery ; for there only some semblance of, and not the things themselves, are seen : all the great things of which it treats, being behind the curtain, and not seen face to face.

The third glass, is that of a man's own mind ; which is the clearest, and gives the most certain sign of supernatural things. It is the image of the Almighty

Almighty in a more substantial form than is represented by the world and the word. The soul is the real image of God's spirituality, immortality, rationality and morality. This then is the brightest perspective wherein spiritual things can be seen. And yet, alas! how little of the Lord is hereby to be seen. What poor manifestations have we of the divine nature and presence, in comparison of that clearer sight we shall have hereafter, when his essence will be more openly displayed unto us, and we shall be for ever in his presence. Thus we see the imperfection and short livedness of all spiritual gifts, and the transcendant excellency of charity.

Now the apostle's intent in this, as well as in the former part of the chapter, is to shew the insufficiency of gifts, even those of the best kind, and likewise to convince the Corinthians of their folly in affecting them above charity. He observed how ambitious many of them were of these things, not so much to promote the honour of God and the good of mankind, as their own praise. Therefore to check this vanity, he beats down their price, that they might less esteem them. That prophecy, which is now but in part, will shortly fail: that tongues, though ever so much admired, will ere long be silenced; and knowledge, how plausible and specious so ever, will in a little time pass away; and therefore to delight in these things, is but to admire a shadow, and to set our hearts upon that which will shortly leave us.

Hence it is easy to see the essential difference betwixt the gifts and graces of the spirit; that the one is temporary and the other eternal. Indeed gifts have their use and excellency; they are highly necessary for, and beneficial to mankind; and if applied to their proper purpose, are not only to be earnestly coveted here, but will be highly rewarded hereafter. Their use and end set them far above
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the gifts of fortune, and give a lustre that outshines all earthly glory. However it is grace only that gives them their use and excellency, without which they are but greater advantages of doing evil; and therefore the apostle wills us above all things to follow after charity, and to desire spiritual gifts only for the good of the church. To which purpose, he would have our hearts established with grace, and our gifts directed by charity; for knowledge of itself puffeth up, but charity edifies.

V. 13. *And now abideth faith, hope, charity; but the greatest of these is charity.* The chapter concludes as it commenced, viz. with the highest character and commendation of charity. The apostle in the beginning had exalted it above all the gifts of the spirit; which, notwithstanding, transcend all earthly things. And here, to raise it to the highest pitch of excellence, by exalting it above all the graces of the spirit, he particularizeth some of the principal, and gives it the preference: And now abideth faith, hope, charity; but the greatest of these is charity.

Great and excellent things are spoken of faith. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the eleventh chapter, ascribes all the memorable acts and virtues of the patriarchs and prophets, to the strength of their faith. In the first verse, he describes the nature of it, styling it *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*: It makes future things present; evidences their reality, and causeth us to be affected with, and to act in respect of them, accordingly; it gives us such a relish of the joys of heaven, as makes us desire and seek them; and such a sense of the miseries of hell, as excites our care and diligence to avoid them. Hence we read of the eye of faith, by which we see things invisible; of its hand, whereby to receive mercy and lay hold on eternal life;

life; of its being a shield, to quench all the fiery darts of the devil; and by it too, we are enabled to resist all the temptations of the world; for *this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.* And yet though faith be so eminent and superlative a grace, the apostle prefers charity before it; for greater than this is charity.

Hope also is an excellent and useful grace of God's spirit; which quickens in duty, and helps to carry us on with courage and comfort in the way to heaven. He that is animated with the hope of being for ever happy in heaven, will bear up under all difficulties in the way to it; he will despise and abandon all that would obstruct so glorious a vision, and follow whatever tends to qualify for so great a blessedness; *for he that hath this hope in him, will purify himself, even as he is pure.* St. Paul styles it a helmet of salvation, and wills us to put it on, to secure us from sin. It is likewise called an anchor of the soul, to keep it from fluctuating, and fix it in a firm expectation of glory. It is also styled a lively hope, in as much as it quickens our endeavours, and brings us in the end to everlasting life. And yet greater than this, is charity.

Now charity is the sum and perfection, the top and eminence of all graces; for as all perfections centre in God, so do all graces in the love of him. *Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; and if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* Hence it is called *the bond of perfectness*; it unites us to God and one another, and keeps all the parts of religion together; and therefore is the *end of the commandment*, as being that to which they all tend; our whole duty being comprized in the love of

of God and man. Thus charity, considered in itself, is the greatest, because the most comprehensive of all graces.

But if we compare it with faith and hope, we shall find, that in many respects it excels both, especially in the usefulness and duration of it.

First, charity is the most useful both in this life, and the next. As for the gifts of the spirit, the highest and best of them, without charity, are nothing worth; and as for the graces of the spirit, they all tend to and are completed in charity; without which, they would be but little better. *Faith* must work by love; otherwise though it were strong enough to remove mountains, it would profit us nothing. The *Hope* of seeing God must issue in a preparation for it; else it will be but a vain and groundless presumption: So that these graces are handmaids in ministering to charity, which is the end of all graces, and of the commandments of God.

Moreover, the usefulness of this grace, above the other two, may be seen in the extensiveness of the benefits of it. Faith and hope are personal virtues, and principally concern ourselves. But charity is an active, dispensing grace, which pours its profusions of good-will and blessing upon all, according to the extent of its influence. Nor is its influence small; it extends to all who are capable of it, especially the community of mankind; to all of whom, though it cannot (by those in whom it dwells) minister in a personal way; yet it wishes, desires, and prays for their prosperity. And where its influence can be more extensive, it imparts whatever may tend to their profit; for love is communicative, and ready to every good work: And therefore being the most active and extensive, it is the greatest of all graces.

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And the usefulness of it extends not to this life only, but also to the next. Faith and hope, indeed, are very eminent and useful here, for they help us to look beyond this world, and make us long and labour for the next; but when that comes, they will be of no farther use, and will for ever be done away. But charity will be our inseparable associate to, and will be of perpetual service in heaven; yea it will be the principal ingredient of the happiness of that place, which consists in loving the Lord, and all the blessed inhabitants of it.

But the last, and the greatest excellence of charity, is the continuance of it. Faith and hope will cease, when this life sees an end; for faith being an evidence of things not seen, when they appear, it will disappear; and hope, which is an expectation of them, will also cease on their actual enjoyment. But in heaven, charity is an unchangeable grace; being the effect of a perfectly pure disposition inhering in the substance of an immortal soul; and having, in the time of probation, withstood all the assaults of temptation and trial, and lived a life agreeable to God; it will, as the effect of grace and faithfulness, be confirmed in that condition, and continue for ever. Thus we see the superlative excellence of this grace, above all the gifts and graces of the spirit; which is sufficient to recommend it to the approbation, choice, and pursuit of all who pay proper regard to their spiritual and eternal interest; to all who would possess a pure and peaceable mind, live in a perpetual discharge of duty to God and man, be saved with an everlasting salvation, and increase their crown of rejoicing. Happy then are they who so pursue as to find that divine disposition which produces this heavenly grace! Happier who retain, and improve it to the highest pitch, and live the life of universal
H love,

love, in all the foregoing instances of it! With such, grace, and the exercise of it, are great, being wholly new born, and living the life of perfect love. To continue in which, and to be eternally crowned; nothing is necessary but to be faithful unto death; for then, to all such, the Lord will say, *well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

GENESIS

GENESIS, Chap. i. Ver. 1.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

IN the beginning of time, the *Æra* of sublunary things, God, by his almighty word, created the heaven and the earth, with all their hosts and inhabitants. He said, let them be, and they were. But by a prior act, he formed the elements, air, earth, water, and fire; which, in their created condition, being a chaos, or confused mass, he separated, and assigned to each their respective provinces.

On the first day, he separated so much of the element of fire, as gave light. This, it is probable, was wide spread; rising from the incorporated fire in every part of the globe. Which not being compacted together, nor appointed to its station, necessarily hovered near the surface.—The second day, he raised the rarified passive fire, making it expand from the earth upward, and called it firmament. This was to be the canopy of the earth; a receptacle of exhalations; to separate betwixt the lower and upper waters; and to be the medium of action betwixt the higher and lower world.—The third day, he separated the earth and water, appointed their places, and fixed their bounds; and made and gave every individual plant its particular form, and power of generation.—The fourth day, he made the sun, moon, and stars, and fixed them in their orbs, to give light to the earth in a more regular and periodical manner, and to be for signs

and seasons, days and years.—The fifth day, he made the fishes and birds, with a power to propagate their kind.—The sixth day, he made terrestrial animals and insects, and man to govern the whole.

Man, the last and best of beings, was created according to the council and likeness of the Lord.

On this momentous occasion, he said, *Let us make man in our own image.*—Let us; the Father took

council and acted in concert with the Son and the Holy Ghost; the council and decree being common to and carried into execution by them all.

Thus, in forming man, for whom all earthly things were formed, he had respect to himself as the pattern. Hence, being the model after which he

was made; the image of his essence, properties, and perfections entered into man's composition:

that which was infinite in God, was in miniature in man. The nature of God is spiritual, holy, and

eternal. Its properties are wisdom, power, goodness, &c. And his perfections are of all that he

is. The image of God in which man was made, and which principally respected his soul, was spiritual in nature, holy in quality, and immortal in

duration. And being intended (under God) to govern his own actions, and the world he was made

for, he was furnished with faculties and properties correspondent thereto; with a discerning mind,

freedom of will, and with wisdom, strength, goodness, &c. sufficient to qualify him for the task assigned.

The matter of his body was the innocent and undesigning elements, mixed and compacted together,

and wrought into a curious frame; with appetites for, and forcible enough to compel him to seek and

receive necessary supplies of food; a power to digest and turn it into blood and spirits, by which

the minutest parts of the animal structure were nourished and strengthened; and senses which made it

a fit habitation for the soul to reside in, being capacitated

pacitated to converse with, and convey to it the knowledge of external things.

Nor was there any imperfection in man's composition. He was perfect in his kind; and in the proportion which agreed with the will of God, and conduced most to his own felicity; the image in which he was made being answerable to both. The construction of his body was inimitable touching the several parts and use of the whole. Erect in stature, polished to perfect smoothness, strong, active, &c. His soul was spirit and life; which is evident from the properties of knowing and willing: Sole powers of a spiritual living principle. Its quality was complete, being the nearest resemblance of the holiness of God. Thus was man made a living, holy, and immortal image of God; free from natural imperfections, and moral turpitude; little lower than the angels; and as capable of doing his will on earth as they in heaven.

And forasmuch as his constitution and conduct were complex, earthly and heavenly, his ability had respect to both. As a worshipper of God he knew his will, by that light which was natural to his understanding, and by such notices as the Almighty was pleased to give, in the way of his providence, or by voice, vision, or inward suggestion. And by his other mental powers, his righteous will and pure affections, he was capable of discharging his duty with ease and delight.

So did the Lord exhibit to human view his excellent glory; his glorious nature and attributes. Out of nothing he formed all that is. For, if the elements were prior to the earth's era, they were not eternal. Out of nothing; not out of himself, nor pre-existent matter, he made them. And how various and complete are the creatures composed of those originals! And surpassing wonder is it, that in the sensitive, or animal compositions, he incor-

perated a spirit of a different texture, capable of conducting the whole machine; of providing for themselves, and answering excellent purposes for their master, man. And that in men, above the rest, he formed a spirit qualifying him to contemplate his wonders of creation and providence; and by a peculiar divineness of disposition, to know, love, delight in, and adore him for his excellencies, and imitate him in acts of wisdom, truth, justice, and goodness.

O thou Most High, thou great, good, and eternal God, whom angels and archangels, and all the heavenly host adore! Thy works on earth praise thee! They are full of thy glory; thy glorious attributes shine conspicuously in them. How wonderful thy wisdom, power, and goodness, and how marvelously mixed are the effects of them, in all *inanimate* things! Their essences, structure, manner of vegetation, &c. are the memorials thereof! Yet in things *animate*, they are drawn in livelier colours. From what small beginnings do their corporal natures grow! An animalcula, a seed is the substance of their origin. And the spirit with which thou hast endowed them, makes them serviceable to the sons of men. Were they wiser, they would elude man's service, and were they not so wise, they would not answer his purpose. Between the extremes thou hast fixed the bounds of their understanding, that they might minister to those intended to minister to thee. But thy glories shine brightest in *him* in whom animal and angelic natures join. To contemplate thy works, and to collect matter of perpetual praise, thou madest man, in the form of his animal nature, upright. In which, in the centre of all his animal senses, thou didst place an intelligent principle, capable of conversing with the earth and heavens, and thereby of discerning thy majesty and glory. Yea, to answer the

the most excellent purpose, and to give brighter displays of thy glory; thou didst constitute him, by a divine disposition of mind, able to hold converse with thyself in a mental manner. So being principled with thy properties, and surrounded by thy essence, he knew, loved, and delighted in thee; and like a drop in the ocean, mixing with its native element, was man in thy immensity!

GENESIS, Chap. iii. Ver. 6.

She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

MAN, notwithstanding his glorious condition, was to pass through a state of trial. Not made to dwell for ever in this world, his way to another lay through probation; obedience or disobedience was to determine his future fate. If he kept the commandment of God, he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever; his earthly body should become spiritual, and he translated to a celestial abode; where animal nature, rendered permanent by its spirituality, would never wax old, suffer no decay, and enjoy all possible satisfactions. His rational and holy nature, likewise, enjoy that rapturous delight, which results from purity, peace of conscience, the presence and service of God. But, if disobedient in eating the fruit of the pro-
hibited

hibited tree, he should die; should be cut off from the invigorating fruit of the tree of life, and be left to the decays of a nature consisting of the elements; which, by reason of their mutual opposition, necessarily tend to dissolve the composition. Their soul too should forfeit its principle life, the favour and image of God: Peace and every sweet sensation of God's love should be lost, and every temper and affection so changed, that knowledge of, love to, and delight in God and things divine, be wholly eradicated. Spiritual nature, by reason of its immortality, become completely and everlastingly miserable through the inherence of an evil disposition and the displeasure of God. Thus the whole man should die; his body to this world, and his soul to God, and both to hope and heaven. A dreadful reverse! Nor did the fearful possibility long remain unrealized: For

She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband with her, and he did eat. Contrary to God's command, they took and eat. Satan, a wily spirit, having lost his place in heaven, became restless in his attempts against God in seeking the destruction of man. And knowing the weakness of woman, and what impression she was susceptible of, he assailed the most accessible side. The serpent, naturally more subtle than any beast of the field, inspired by Satan, accosted her with, *Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* She answered, *he hath, lest ye die.* He said, *ye shall not die.* For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat. Thus the fatal deed was done, which brought death into the world.

Their

Their bodies, like grass, became subject to decay and die, were destined to return to dust: To them, the virtue of the tree of life, was no more. Their moral powers; their mind, will, and affections likewise were deprived of their divineness, and rendered diabolical; a fair portraiture of satan by whom they were deceived. And by reason of a spiritual nature running parallel with his own in point of duration, they were subjected to a punishment of the same sort with himself, in perpetual banishment from the Lord's presence and the glory of his power. Of these consisted the death, they incurred by disobedience.

Nor did they sin and die for themselves only. Being *caput gentis*, the head of human kind, their progeny were all involved; for *in Adam all died*. According to their state of existence, which was seminal, they sustained the same loss with their progenitors. Being wrapped up in the original parent, the defection of the one was, in that respect, the defection of the other. Hence it was, that all the world became guilty, corrupt, and mortal: *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners*. So was the work of God marred in his hands; his love and likeness were lost, access to him cut off, fear and shame entered, the ground cursed for his sake, the seasons became inclement, the beasts rebellious, heaven was forfeited, and man banished paradise. O! how unlike the state from which they fell! That was rich, and promising of all future felicity; this wretched, helpless, and hopeless!

O thou, whose work was perfect, was such as thyself, whose judgment is unerring, didst approve, and pronounce, *very good*! Thou madest man an image of thyself in understanding, purity, and immortality; capable by his animal senses and rational spirit, of contemplating the wonders of thy creation and providence, and by a sameness and union
with

with thyself in his soul, of knowing, loving, and delighting in thee, and keeping thy commandments. But reason religionized, with which thou didst endue him, and without which he could not serve thee, was choice; a power to choose or refuse a conformity to thy commands. How then couldst thou, without a compulsion inconsistent with the freeness of his choice, and the nature of thy commands, curb and keep him back from committing sin, when his choice was not to do thy will? To have over-ruled his will, would have been to contradict the law of his nature and thy commands, and to render him unaccountable for his conduct: This thou couldst not do, because thou couldst not err, or act inconsistently. His sin then, O thou Most High, was such as thou couldst not prevent: Therefore no evil can be justly charged on thee for that. But why didst thou involve all future ages in his fate? Why did all exist in, sin, and suffer with him? Did the law of creation require this? Or didst thou arbitrarily ordain it? Was it because thou didst decree, that if they sinned in Adam, thy Son should be their substitute to save them from that sin? Yea, and from all their other sins, if any they did commit, if they would depend on his merit, plead it with thyself, and improve it to their own purification and thy praise. This, O thou who art excellent in all things, was thy intent! A measure, full of compassion and kindness! Hence, now, notwithstanding that men have sinned, they may be saved! How great is thy goodness, O Lord!

GENESIS, Chap. iii. Ver. 15.

The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.

THE sin of Adam was soon opposed with the promise of a Saviour. The remote seed of the woman who ruined human race, saves from sin, death, and hell: out of the destroyer comes deliverance. The peculiarly favoured woman, in this important affair, was Mary, a virgin espoused to Joseph. Her seed; emphatically so, because conceived without the concurrence of man. Jesus Christ is that seed. Touching whom two things may be spoken: First, his person; and, secondly, his performance. His revealed characters render the nature of his person conspicuous; affording the clearest evidence of his being both divine and human. Hence he is styled, *The mighty God, and the Son of man.* The mighty God is an appellation too high for any creature; it comports only with what is self-existent and eternal; with him who is, *over all, God, blessed for ever: The Independent Being, who was, is, and is to come.* The *Son of man*, is significant of a nature corresponding with man's. This was a composition of matter and spirit, a body and a soul subsisting together. And which, notwithstanding their connexion, differed both in their essences, and in the time of their beginning to exist, the one being prior to the other. This is evident from his manner of appearing: For, when he came into the world, *a body, (said he) hast thou prepared me.* But, as God, over all, he could not come into the world; inasmuch as Godhead implies

implies universal existence. That then for which a body was prepared, was both prior to and compatible with it. And a personal circumscribed spirit only could agree with a contracted body—It is likewise of consideration, in the discussion of this point, to observe, that if the office of mediator was performed in heaven (by Christ as God-man) before his ascension, it was by his human soul acting in conjunction with his divinity. And to suppose that nothing was done, in that respect, till his body was glorified, does not well consist with the nature of a personal and perpetual mediatorship. The conclusion then of his being God and man in one Christ, is natural and necessary. By which incomparable composition he was qualified to encounter all the difficulties, and discharge all the duties, consequent on commencing man's mediator.

The second thing to be considered, is *Breaking the serpent's head*. By the serpent is to be understood, satan: The one being put for the other. The serpent, through satan's insinuation, deceived Eve; and, therefore, the form of punishment runs in his name.—Breaking his head, signifies destroying his power and defeating his policy; which, in regard of what he did to Adam and his seminal seed, by the first offence, was fully done. The devil, by conquering, according to the laws of war, claimed them as his lawful captives. But Christ, by assuming human nature, undertook their ransom; which rendered him to mankind what Adam should have been. Adam should have preserved himself and all his dependents, (while they existed in him) from sin, guilt, and death. But this duty, through satan's temptation, and a defect in his own diligence, he did not discharge. Hence, satan gained the ascendancy, and subdued the world to himself. He then first acquired his right to the title of *Deus seculi*, the god of this world. However,

ever, he was not suffered long to remain in peaceable possession: For as by disobedience men incurred death; Christ died that they might live: *He tasted death for every man, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

Christ's death then being to satisfy the justice of God for man's sin; on his becoming subject thereto, deliverance immediately obtained. Adam, it is probable, and his seminal seed, it is certain, were saved really or reversionally from original sin and all its consequences. * Really, from what immediately concerned them, and reversionally, from what was remote: *By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* This freed Adam from the guilt of his actual, and his seed from their seminal sin; whereby the forfeited favour of God, in that respect, was recovered. This was their life.—From the same cause issued life as it respected the moral state of their mind: *For in him was life; and that life was the light of men; a light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.* This quickened Adam's corrupted soul, and gave him a power to seek and serve the Lord. The same is given to, and makes all alive, that spring from his loins. This is evident, from the state of those who die in infancy; which being before they commit actual sin, are certainly saved. But as that is the effect of being saved from original sin; it infers, that they are delivered both from the guilt and turpitude of it. And it being as necessary to be so saved, in order to serve the Lord, in this life; doubtless the living are as highly favoured as the dying.—*And as in Adam all died, in body; so in Christ shall all, at the resurrection, be made alive.*

I

Thus

* For as by one man's disobedience the many (or multitude of mankind, *οἱ πολλοί*) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall the many (*οἱ πολλοί*) be made righteous. Rom. v. 19.

Thus the serpent's head was broken; all the advantage gained over mankind by original sin, shall be for ever done away. The moral ones are already removed; and the natural ones will be finally lost at the resurrection, and renovation of this cursed world. Death, the last enemy, will then be slain, and all will live for ever. The earth will be purged of thorns and thistles and every noxious thing, and rendered habitable of beings spiritual and holy. The hostile heavens will become placid; bellowing thunder, forked lightning, and clouds bursting with water, will be no more: There will be *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*. Of what then has the tempter to boast? Where are the spoils he has taken? They are plucked out of his hands. The last evil effect of that fatal day, will soon disappear.

But the seed of the woman, in his mediatorial undertaking, breaks the serpent's head, as well in regard of actual as original sin. The first sin being atoned for and taken away; all men were restored to the Lord's favour, and by the grace of his spirit rendered capable of doing his will, and, thereby, of continuing in that condition. But, notwithstanding, they are capable of committing sin; which, when guilty of, become subject to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire: For the wages of sin, is death. From which condition, it is as impossible to redeem themselves, as to create a world. Merit, for what is amiss, man has none; none that can deliver him from debt, death, and damnation. But Jesus Christ, in compassion to sinners, offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Hence, pardon, a new nature, and heaven are now attainable, are free for all who will, in the use of appointed means, obtain them. And this sacrifice is not only necessary for all sinners, but there is none beside: For other foundation can

no man lay, than Jesus Christ, whose blood alone cleanses from all sin.

Gracious God, thou hast done all things well! How marvellous is thy work of redemption, as well as of creation! To deliver men from their disastrous condition, from all the effects of Adam's offence, thou didst depute thy Son to be their suffering substitute. And his precious life was poured out to appease thy wrath for that first, original offence. So didst thou restore all the seminal seed of the first parent of men to a state, in which, if they live and die, they will dwell with thyself for ever; for of such, thou hast said, thy kingdom consisteth. But how great was thy kindness in giving him to suffer also for actual evil! Alas! notwithstanding deliverance from the first evil, if every individual had been left to stand or fall by his sinless or sinful life, how few had been saved! But having received satisfaction from thy Son for whatever sins should be committed, thou canst now be just, and yet justify the ungodly; yea, forgive many offences as well as few, and glorify the forgiven offender for ever with thyself. This, O Lord, is thy doing, the pure fruit of thy benevolent affection! What favour then canst thou refuse? Surely thou who gavest thy Son, wilt with him freely give all things! And if so great thy benevolence to sinners, what will thy complacential affection do for saints? What good thing, in earth or heaven, wilt thou withhold from them that love thee? All that thy goodness can give, and their capacity contain, thou wilt freely confer. How great then, O Lord our God, is thy goodness to the children of men!

GENESIS, Chap. vi. Ver. 3.

My spirit shall not always strive with man.

FATHER, Son, and Spirit are three persons, in one Lord. In relation to mankind, they have their distinct offices; the Father creates, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies.

The Son by redeeming with price, and restoring with power, all mankind to a capability of discharging their duty; made it possible for them to live in all good conscience here, and be crowned with glory hereafter. This was the first noble effect of his passion. But the Antideluvians, contrary to the principle of grace planted in their hearts, the instructions of Providence, and other means calculated for their continuance in well-doing, sinned against God, themselves, and others. *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually. All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and the earth was filled with violence. All flesh—all the sons and daughters of men. Had corrupted his way—the way of the Lord, that which he had made known to, and commanded them to walk in, in respect of religion and righteousness. The way of religion, it is highly probable, they corrupted by idolatry and superstition; and the way of righteousness by violence, injustice, and every other species of wrong.*

To this deplorable condition they had brought themselves (partly) by too eager a pursuit of, and attachment to, the things of time and sense. Those whose

whose religion titled them *sons of God*, saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. The daughters of men were the descendants of those who had forsaken the true God and corrupted themselves.

The daughters had copied the example of their fathers, and their hearts were darkened. And the fair Atheists became a snare to the sons of God. Being connected with them by ties of a temporal kind, they soon became like them in what concerned their minds. Having loved their persons, they learnt their ways; and of sons of God, commenced the servants of sin. Thus the good, mixing with the bad, the wholly body of men was corrupted. Yea, to such a pitch of impiety did they arrive, that not only all the inhabitants of the earth (save Noah and his family) were corrupt, but they were so in the highest degree: *Every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, were only evil continually.* Every imagination; the motions of their minds were all and only evil; none differed from another in quality or kind, having no mixture of good. And, they were continually so; there was no interval of any thing else, no happy moment producing any thing pleasing to God, or profitable to man. *And the earth was filled with violence.* A foe to God was never true friend to men; that heart which is not subject to him, is an enemy to the true interest of them. They were violent opposers and oppressors of each other: Like the wolf for rapine, and the fox for wiles, pursuing and pursued, each others prey. This was their general character.

Notwithstanding, the spirit of God strove with them. God, who willed not their destruction, was long-suffering and abundant in goodness. He not only permitted them to survive their sins and escape the punishment due to them, but took such

methods as were best calculated to reduce them to a state of obedience : his spirit strove with them. His spirit is the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to help the infirmities of the mind. He strove with them by his immediate operation on their hearts ; reproving them for their sins, and exciting them to repent and turn to God ; pointing out their danger, and shewing the way to escape it. Likewise, ~~mediately~~, or by means accompanied with the energy of the same spirit ; whether providences, preaching, or whatever else he made use of.

But so great was the moral infatuation of those men, as to render abortive every good beginning ; and, therefore, he said, *my spirit shall not always strive with man*. Long and largely had he striven with them. But, at last, he limited them to 120 years, beyond which their time of trial should not continue. Wickedness had so far prevailed, that he determined to put a period to it, if they did not repent, by a general destruction of them. Yet by granting them a greater respite, he discovered how disagreeable it was to destroy them ; for he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner. But this respite from death and destruction, was ineffectual. Though Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and publicly prepared the ark, and thereby apprized them of approaching danger ; yet all was lost upon them, inasmuch as their wickedness continued and increased. But few who lived till the time of the flood, were worthy to escape and be numbered with righteous Noah. He and his family only entered the ark. All the rest, by continuing obstinate, were swept away. A dreadful destruction !

It is probable indeed, that the flood, which was gradual, and so gave space for repentance, was more effectual than the preaching of Noah. This, as a matter of affliction, through the agency of the spirit

spirit of Christ, had a moral effect. By this spirit he *preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.* Till the flood came, they were disobedient. But when that began to inclose them as within the walls of a prison; (the same spirit still striving with them) it is probable that some repented, turned to God, &c. and, therefore, tho' they *were judged like men in the flesh*, for their sins, by that terrible temporal untimely death; yet *they lived*, by being saved from their sins, according to *God in the spirit.*

And now granting that some of those disobedient were, after all, saved from sin and hell; how much better was it for Noah and his family to be obedient, and thereby to be saved from the flood as well as from future wrath? In like manner, if some now, who have long withstood the efforts of God's word, providence, and grace, are, at last, saved from sin through the instrumentality of some sore affliction. What is that compared to an early state of mind, which qualifies to conform to the Lord's commands, and thereby to glorify him, do good to men, and by both to lay up treasure above? Surely none can be too early in a good thing, do too much for the honour of God, the advantage of others, nor be too happy in heaven.

If then salvation were sure to those who live long in sin; (which yet it is very far from) how great, notwithstanding, would be their loss both here and hereafter! The want of that happiness which flows from the life of God in the soul, and results from his service, is what all the profits and pleasures of this world cannot supply; and the loss of that reward in glory, which a life of services and sufferings for the Lord give a right to expect, is also exceeding great.

Moreover,

Moreover, when they are awakened to a sense of the evil of sin, and their own extreme guilt; their tongue cannot declare the terrors with which they are tormented, when, after living long, they find they have only lived ill. Alas, when the horrors of a guilty heart take hold of them, all the pleasures of sin are lost, drowned in that depth of distress. And when the fearful forebodings of hell, which are inseparable from guilty souls, shew that their damnation does not slumber, they find no consolation from a reflection on past pleasurable practices. So fruitless of good is sin to the sinner when it is past, and when he is ready to perish. Then, if a thousand worlds would undo what he has done, he would freely part with them all. He then that would see good days, let him turn early to the Lord, that his iniquities may not increase, and that in old age he may not have the burthen and curse of a guilty conscience, nor the direful forebodings of damnation.

But a long continuance in sin, may not be succeeded with these only, but also with a far worse evil; for, as the decree of God is, that his spirit shall not always strive with man; so if the sinner be forsaken of God before he die, his damnation is sure. And who is the Lord's counsellor; to whom has he told the precise time, or period of his striving? Are not all men, in this respect, equally ignorant? It may be long or short, run parallel with life or be but for a time. Seeing then that the time of its continuance is uncertain; those who defer to obey that divine monitor, in refusing to repent and reform, while the day of grace endures, will find the dreadful effects of it for ever. Then, great as the evil of the want of good, of a guilty conscience, and the forebodings of destruction are; they will be found but little compared with what the damn'd endure. And more than probable.

probable it is, that many, very many of the Antideluvians were deluged in a sea of eternal sorrows. And many, in every age, it may confidently be believed, who deferred their repentance till the last, were brought into the same unhappy circumstances. Then the wretches began to roar for the disquietness of their souls; when hell had taken hold of them, their repentings kindled. But, alas! it was too late to preserve them from perishing. Had they been half as heartily concerned while the day of grace endured, it is more than probable, yea, it is certain, they had been preserved from going down to the pit. But it is the unhappiness, the folly, the madness of men to be least concerned about matters of the greatest concernment. Any earthly thing, however trifling and foreign to their affairs, is sufficient to engage their attention; but whether they sin or serve God, be in a state of condemnation or salvation, be going to hell or heaven, they will not be at the least pains to make any proof of. So without any sense of their soul, they spend their time as a tale that is told. Hence, though all know and acknowledge that they must die; yet few, very few, either know or care what will be the consequence. And some, to deceive themselves with a better grace, buoy themselves up with a false and foolish hope of heaven. While others dare the damnation of hell, by saying, if it be their place and portion, they shall not be alone, they shall have company. But is so weighty a matter to be thus trifled with? Who would so risk their health or fortune? Mad then, intirely mad, is that man or woman who so flights the concerns of their soul! But their madness will be detected; for when death, the king of terrors, takes hold of them, they will be as fast as the men in the flood. Death has a strong hand; arrests the sinner; lays him low, even to the ground. None can withstand its power; it

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is a snare, a gin, a trap, into which all must fall, and from which none can escape. Is this then the end of all living? It is. To this all attend. The great, the wise, the gay; the proud, the passionate, the profligate; the covetous, the prodigal, and all other orders, nations, and ages meet here as at their common home. What then is life? Alas! how short, and how sure to see an end! And oh! the circumstance of uncertainty, which attends the continuance of it! An hour, a day, a year, seven, or seventy years, &c. may be its bound. And what succeeds? An eternity of time and of torments. Of torments which neither tongue can fully tell, nor pen describe; a guilty conscience, fire and brimstone, an angry God, blasted hopes, dark despair, fearful lookings-for, devils and damned souls for associates, shrieks, howlings, weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and, in one word, the damnation of hell! And for what will men plunge themselves into this perdition? Is the pleasure of the senses and appetites of the body, or the passions or desires of the mind, enough? Dear bought pleasure which costs the loss of heaven and the gaining of Hell!

But how much better to gain the heavenly inheritance! And is the whole of life, whether short or long, too much to spend in contracting a taste for eternal joys? O who would not be at all possible pains, to acquire a qualification for a comfortable eternity! How much expence of labour are many at for the poor short lived comforts of this life! Were men as assiduous for their souls as they are for their bodies, they would shine in the graces and fruits of the spirit here, and as the sun in glory hereafter. Happy then are they, who by a wise use of time and talents, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, by the renewing of their minds! Blessed are the people who are in such a case. Their heaven is begun below: Here they have a taste of eternal

nal joys, and there they will have the fulness. God is their God, angels their servants, and heaven their future home. Hence a few more labours of love, and they will be gathered into the heavenly inheritance, where they will vie with angels in brightness, blessing, and obedience. And according to their faithfulness here, they will rank in dignity there. Every order will be holy and happy; but the greatest instruments of the Lord's praise, and the most profitable in promoting the salvation of men, will shine the brightest. Blessed then are they who, by *continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality!*



R O M A N S, Chap. xii. Ver. 1.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

THIS text, which gives a summary account of the blessings specified in the proceeding part of the epistle, points out the returns to be made for them; and so is excellently calculated to promote practical religion. In treating of which I shall,

1. Offer some consideration of the mercies of God.
2. Observe what it is to present our bodies

a living sacrifice, &c. And, 3. make some use of the whole.

I. And first of the mercies of God. Mercy, as an attribute of the Deity, is opposed to his justice; and, as a blessing vouchsafed to sinners, is the reverse of his wrath.

Wrath is the effect of God's justice against offenders. The ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, are the objects of it. Ungodliness is a contrariety to the commands of the first table of the law, and unrighteousness to those of the second. And these comprize all that is required, being a compendium of all the commands given as a rule of life and of judgment.

Hence, being the rule with which the conduct of all should correspond; in whatever sense and degree they are opposed or come short of, wrath is incurred. Sin is a transgression of the law; therefore it is impossible to violate it, and be guiltless. And according to the degree of dishonour done to God, or injury to man, or both, guilt is proportioned. Yea, the nature and circumstances of sin being attended to by him who judgeth righteously; the more heinous the one, and aggravated the other, the greater is the wrath of God.

But forasmuch as sin is incapable of suffering, wrath more properly points at, and is predicated of, the sinner. An act, whether temporal or spiritual, wanting free agency and accountableness, cannot be censured, nor suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Hence the effect is put for the cause. Man is the cause; and, therefore, the object of wrath. Yea, the proper and principal cause; for though many things may concur and contribute their assistance; yet having no authority to command, nor power to compel, their influence over and energy in his actions, are only such as he seeks or suffers them to have. So being the principal efficient of what is performed,

performed, he is proportionably accountable and punishable for his offences.

And this wrath is revealed from heaven; God, who dwells in heaven, has made it known on the earth; it is become conspicuous to all creatures. So many are its tokens, and so convincing its evidence, that the dullest and most obdurate, receive some impressions from it. It is revealed in judgments: He made it manifest in punishing the Antideluvians with a flood; in burning Sodom and Gomorrah; and causing the earth to swallow up Korah and his company. It is exhibited also in the threatnings of his word, having repeatedly declared, that the *wicked shall be turned into hell*. The consciences of men are likewise acquainted with it: Cain, Manassah, David, Judas, Peter, and all that have sinned, have, more or less, been sensible of it. A court is erected in human hearts, at the tribunal of which they are tried and condemned. That spirit of judgment which presides over the whole earth, and takes cognizance of every creature, awakens (when conscience is asleep) to a sense of, and condemns for sin. Thus, and in many other ways, is wrath revealed.

An aggravating circumstance of which is, it is the wrath of God. The wrath of a King, is terrible. But how much more to be feared is this than that! God is a consuming fire. What fire is to human flesh, his wrath is to an immortal spirit. It will render all who continue exposed to it, completely and everlastingly miserable. Its greatness is inconceivable. The most terrible things in nature are the figures under which it is represented, and all fall infinitely short of a full description. But guilty consciences, and other calamitous things, though but faintly describing its fulness, yet sufficiently shew its intolerableness. Forasmuch then

as indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish are upon every one that doeth evil, mercy is thereby rendered indispensably necessary. A reception of which, delivers from sin and wrath, and all their consequences.

The *mercies of God* originate in the passion of Christ; his death rendering him propitious to men. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses; For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Mercy and justice are contrary and incompatible. Justice in extreme, leaves no place for mercy. And in extreme it must have been, if not satisfied by the sufferings of Christ. *But he, the just, suffered for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*

The procuring cause of mercies then being the sufferings of Christ; their nature and number include all the good things conferred on mankind; particularly, after committing sin. No longer than man can say, he has not sinned, will justice be his defence, nor, in the way of it, can he receive any good thing. As soon as personal sin takes place, he forfeits the favour to which he was restored in consequence of Christ's atonement for original sin, and is cut off from a legal right to all other blessings. Hence every future benefit must come in the way of mercy. Patience in bearing with their behaviour; long-suffering in lengthening out the thread of a forfeited life; quickening when dead in sin; forgiving what is past; renewing the heart in holiness; and thereby giving a right to, and a qualification for, heaven, are some of the many blessings vouchsafed to sinners, according to the dispensation of mercy.

God, who desireth not the death of a sinner, does not soon execute his wrath. His patience in bearing with and granting a reprieve, are conspicuous:

quous : Multitudes being permitted to live, as long as age, infirmities, excesses, and other things contributing to contract life, will allow : He is *long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. Hence, mercy, thus dispensed, is the support of all that have sinned : For were he extreme to mark what is amiss, punishment would presently take place. With what propriety then may sinners say, *It is of thy mercies, O Lord, that we are not consumed !*

And when by repeated wickednesses conscience becomes callous ; when every beam of religious light, and spark of divine life are extinguished, how merciful is the Most High in re-kindling that which their extreme madness has utterly quenched. And yet how often is this ? What intervals of gross stupidity are in the lives of many, wherein they neither fear God, nor regard man ! Sensualities and sins, the practices and portions of animals and devils, are their all. And, in this way they would walk, till they closed their eyes in death, and opened them in damnation, if the mercy of God, in the dispensation of his spirit, word, and providence, did not prevent. But herein he is abundant, checking, controuling, condemning, making the heart sad, setting it against sin, terrifying with the thoughts of death and hell, rendering the things of life insipid, shewing their insufficiency, and convincing that true rest can only be found in God the centre of immortal souls : No method, consistent with the freedom of the will, is left unassayed. And when these are attended to, concurred with, and used according to the intended purposes of them, they are succeeded with greater and better. He who wills and waits for man's return, and contributes all that he consistently can to effect it, will not cast him out when he comes :

For when a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, he shall save his soul alive.

This is evident from that which is next in order, and is absolutely necessary to be received, viz. the mercy of forgiveness: Which is given to all who with a penitent and believing heart, contend for it. The Lord, who knoweth their wants, and sympathizeth with them, will save. Sinners labouring under a sense of their complicated guilt, cannot labour in vain, if they faint not. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,* is his language. And how safely may they depend on his word, who cannot lie! The heavens may loose their brightness, and the earth be removed out of its place, but the truth of God's word cannot fail: Hence *he that believeth shall never be confounded.*

This mercy was conferred upon, and made known to, the Romans; they witnessed the blessedness of *the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered*: For being justified by faith they had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor was this the privilege of the primitive people only; all ages, nations, and orders of men, believing according to the light of their dispensation, are favoured with it: For *to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive the remission of sins.* All to whom he is explicitly preached, or otherwise made known; by believing in him, obtain this benefit as the fruit and proof of their faith. This is evident from the dispensations of God respecting ages and places, which have been very different, and yet answered the same salutary purpose, to all who properly used them. Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Paul, &c. are specimens of what many were, and

and what all might have been, under their respective dispensations.

And this, which is consequent on believing, is conspicuous to the believer; and, as the fruit of faith, serves to distinguish it from unbelief. Conscious unbelief is evidenced by guilt, fear, and shame, which are sure signs of sin and the displeasure of God. Faith is exhibited by signs of a dissimilar nature; pardon, peace, and joy having an inseparable connection with it. In the happiness of which, all the senses of the soul participate: It tastes the loving kindness of the Lord in the satisfaction arising from a sense of his mercy; sees his salvation in a deliverance from guilt and the forebodings of future wrath; hears the melodious sound, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven; feels the balsamic peace of a healed conscience; and smells the sweet odour of his holy anointing: The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost; and that having respect to, and influencing all the inward senses, it evidences to each the Lord's salvation.

A farther benefit signified by mercy, is the help of the Holy Spirit. This accompanies forgiveness, and is that to the understanding, will, and affections, which it is to the conscience: The one gives peace, and the other purity. Purity, as a principle, is a right state of soul, the lovely image of the Deity, a holiness and happiness resembling his. And being infused into all its faculties; it is the mind's moral light, whereby it discerns good and evil; the will's power, to choose the good and refuse the evil; and the strength of the affections, to act according to the dictates of the one, and the choice of the other. The degree of which is ascertained by that which is promised to, and required of, its possessors. That which is promised

as a principle, corresponds with what is required in practice; the one is an intire conformity to the spirit, and the other to the precepts of Christ; the being principled as he was, and walking as he also walked.

Connected with this, is that of being his heirs, and having an earnest of heaven. That spirit, or holy disposition of heart, which unites man to, and makes him one with his maker, gives an interest in, and is a foretaste of what is future. His immortal nature, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, imbibes a holiness and happiness which give a joy alone subsisting hereafter: Joy in hope of the glory which shall be revealed, being a participation of that which will run parallel with the ages of eternity: A joy peculiar to, and inseparable from, all the children of God. Hence, the present probationary, and the future confirmed state, have the same general name: A kingdom is characteristic of both. The kingdom of grace, seated in the soul, is a divine constitution, consisting of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And the kingdom of glory, situate in realms remote from this earthly orb, is the continuance of that constitution, and the super-added excellence of the heavenly habitation. This is that, the happiness of which, eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor the heart conceived. It is incomparable: All the splendors of a palace, the magnificence of a court, and whatever else that is high and honourable among men, are but shadows and dark resemblances of it. It is beauty without deformity, and excellence without alloy, the court of the temple of the universe, adorned with every spiritual embellishment, the art of God could furnish. And in this residence of God, angels, and men, all the senses of glorified bodies (for the bodies of believers are intitled to it) and every mental

tal power, will have their satisfying delights. These will be granted to all, who, at their exit out of this world, are interested in the merit by the renewing of the Spirit of Christ; and will be proportioned to the degree of well-doing in the present probationary condition.

These are the general mercies which the Romans had, and which all believers have received. The particulars are innumerable, the whole of man's life being filled with them. For while in a state of probation, every occurrence of God's providence; judgment inflicted, or blessing vouchsafed, are intended to answer some profitable purpose; to correct and humble for what has been amiss, rectify what is wrong, supply what is wanting, preserve or move more swiftly in the right way.

II. I shall now take notice of the returns, which man, for mercies, is under obligation to make. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, &c.* Your bodies: A part is put for the whole; for man is a being composed of a body and a soul. It is probable, in this, the apostle alludes to the matter and manner of the Jewish sacrifices. They offered the bodies of beasts. But the blood, which was the life, was shed before they were offered on the Lord's altar. However, though the law required these in the substance and form of a sacrifice; yet as the gospel, in point of personal performance, admits of no substitute, man must be his own sacrifice, and his all must be offered; his human, rational, and divine parts must concur and act in concert.

Sacrifice is of two sorts; atonement for sin, and gratitude to God for his benefits. The latter alone comports with the sense of this place. The matter of it is man; the properties are living and holy;
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and the end acceptableness to God.—But notwithstanding that the body and mind, the two constituent parts of man, are required; yet his actions are the principal ingredients of his offering. His mind is the root or principle of them, and his body the acting instrument. The body, to render it active, and its actions acceptable, must live, by continuing in union with, and by participating of, the influences of the enlivened soul. The mind, in the condition and quality of it, by the mercies of God, is alive; the guilt and power of sin are gone, and it lives in the favour and image of God. And this living principle, in conjunction with the body, is the spring whence all his actions flow. Such then as is the root, such may be the fruit; the life resident in the one, may be derived to the other. This is the natural, though not the absolute order. For man, as accountable for his conduct, acts as a free agent, and, therefore, may either obey the dictates of his renewed nature or deviate from them. The Lord, without his free choice, will not force him to do well, and other things, without his own consent, cannot compel him to do ill. Hence, it is at his own option, whether he will present himself to God or not. However, having life in himself, his actions may be the issues of it; the whole tendency of his mind, the senses of his body, and the words and works produced by both, may be so many living sacrifices.

Holy. That which quickens, constitutes man holy; it frees him from whatever is sinful in the moral disposition of his mind, and transforms him into the image of him who is holy in himself, and the pattern of holiness to others. And from this holy principle, a holy practice may proceed. Holiness, in the negative sense, is a ceasing from all that is sinful; in the positive, complying with all that

that is required. Of which, touching the whole, the will of God is the rule. And which, objectively, is signified to man by the suggestions of his spirit, the dictates of his word, and the occurrences of Providence. Subjectively, it is exhibited in the law written on his heart; in which he is a law to himself. And this, though not so clearly unfolding what is future; yet in respect of what is present, its dictates are sacred and decisive. And its natural tendency being to please God, to pursue its own interest, and the advantage of others; a perfect compliance with its measures, is complete holiness. As a principle, it is set to serve God; and as a rule, in all practical things, it is unerring. But, in matters more abstruse, and to prevent deception from Satan and other seducing things, recourse must be had to God, the scriptures, and providence. These, in difficult cases, concurring with the light of a Christian's mind, will be of sovereign service. Holiness then, as the property of a personal sacrifice, is the effect of a heart wholly renewed, manifested in all that is pleasing to God, and profitable to mankind.

Present your bodies. Man, whose sacrifice is himself, is his own sacrificer. The manner of presenting it is in a voluntary way: Not by constraint, but of a ready mind. Such offerings only are acceptable to God. For being a free agent, his actions depend on the use of that agency. His ability, as an offerer, is himself; his body, reason, and religious disposition, which qualify him to know, will, and do whatsoever is required of him. And which, in the sense he is accountable for them, are at his own disposal. For though he may be influenced by visible and invisible things to do or omit his duty; yet he can in all things act in opposition to them; therefore having a power to move himself according to

to his pleasure; he may present himself with intelligence and intention, with resolution and perseverance, agreeable to the will of God: *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* God's glory; the glory of his name, nature, attributes, and grace should be aimed at in all that is done. His name must be adored for his excellencies, his nature as the pattern of purity, his attributes as the rule of all that is right, and his grace as the source of all blessings: The glory due to him for what he is in himself and does to his creatures, by a general sacrifice, should be given; the life as well as language of men must speak his praise.

Acceptable to God. This is the issue of offering a holy sacrifice. Man, whose original composition was calculated to qualify him to contribute his part in the universal quire; by guilt and the corruption of his heart, is rendered inadequate to it. But being created a-new in Christ Jesus, he is equal to the task assigned. Hence, his person being accepted, the spring of his offerings agreeable, and presenting them freely; a concurrence of causes so conformable to the object of his offering, render the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and an intire devotion of mind and body in well-doing, acceptable to him. He receives them as the ultimate end of the offering of Christ, the effect of his spirit in the renewed heart, and the free-will offering of man made for the honour of his name, and the instrument of his praise.

Which is your reasonable service. The reasonableness of this service arises from its own nature, as being the effect of reason moralized by the mercies of God. It is reasonable also as opposed to the less reasonable service of the Jews; and the more unreasonable one of the Gentiles. The Jewish service

vice chiefly consisted of the offerings of dead animals, and the Gentiles of a blind superstition paid to Gods of their own devising; but this of a living, holy, personal practice, in civil and sacred things. Its reasonableness likewise results from being the effect of mercies, as all the acceptable services of those who were once sinners, originate in them. How great then their obligation to present unto him a holy sacrifice! And how unreasonable would it be to refuse it! It is reasonable too as redounding to the advantage of the offerer: For while man is sacrificing to his God, by walking in his fear, praising him for his benefits, and imitating him in his wisdom, justice, truth, goodness, mercy, &c. he finds suitable returns, blessings being abundantly given to the obedient.

Forasmuch then as mercies capacitate to comport with the duty of doing all to the glory of God; and being the motive to induce to a discharge of it, it is highly reasonable to render it. And to facilitate obedience, and satisfy the most sanguine expectations; he has promised to proportion man's reward in heaven to his work on earth. Whatever is done for the honour of God, and the good of mankind, if they continue in well-doing, till the time of probation is past, will be found, in the fruit of it in the realms of never-ending joys.

III. I come now to the use of this doctrine. And how emphatical is the Apostle's exhortation! His motive is mercy, and the end to be answered by it, an acceptable sacrifice! Mercies are many; the life of man is filled with them. And what should have so much weight with him? Nothing, to a sinner, is so profitable and pleasant. They save from sin and hell; constitute holy and happy; qualify to serve God acceptably, and enjoy his everlasting kingdom. These are the most precious things life admits of.

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And how they are rendered necessary, has been seen. The sin of man is the cause of wrath. And wrath is the most terrible thing. Other evils affect the body or estate of men, but this soul and body for ever. Nor is any thing more sure than that wrath will issue in endless ruin, if sin be continued in. The Lord cannot lie; therefore he will pour his indignation upon them, and the smoke of their torment will ascend up for ever. Thus sinners are circumstanced; they are upon the brink of endless burnings, into which, in the twinkling of an eye, they may fall.

To prevent which, observe your sins; for they are the reason why wrath is revealed, and why your damnation slumbereth not. How was the first part of your life spent? Did you so remember your Creator, as not to offend him? Your sports and plays, and other senseless ways of spending time, were but little proof of it. And your heart being more placed on them than him, shews that they were more to you than he was. You had then another God, and were guilty of idolatry. And did not you soon take his name in vain, by irreverently mixing it with your common conversation, and thereby prostituting it to trifling, vile, and prophane purposes? Now, do you consider with whose name you thus trifled? Did he not make, and does he not support all things? And is he not able to stop your breath in a moment? But, perhaps, you have been more prophane; cursing yourself, or others, or animals, or things inanimate by it, begging him to damn, or destroy them! Monstrous wretch! Had he done according to your desire, what destruction had been in the earth! And did you expect him to serve your murderous temper and tongue? or you only uttered the venom of a malignant mind, you neither knew nor cared how?

Alas!

Alas ! you have sinned ; and without repentance, the Lord will repay you with eternal punishment ; *for he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*—Nor, I fear, have you been more careful to keep his sabbath. Have not some temporal works been designedly deferred to, and others done on it, which might have been left undone ? If so, how did you keep it holy by doing no manner of work ? And if you went to a place of worship, was it not to spend an idle hour, or for recreation, or to see and be seen ? You neither went to serve the Lord, nor save your soul. And how irreverent was your whole behaviour ! Sometimes gazing about ; at other times half a-sleep ; and now and then laughing or talking ; and when you joined in the service, it was with no more sense than if it had not concerned you. And, perhaps, to complete the evil, the rest of the day was spent in games, sports, and pastimes, or in such conversation and ways of proceeding as did not consist with Christianity. Notwithstanding, you could boldly say, “ Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.” What mockery ! So to prophane-ness, you added hypocrisy ! Oh ! wretched creature !

Did you keep the commands of the second table, by honouring your father and mother, and by doing what they commanded, and leaving undone that which they prohibited ? These, while under their care, except in matters wherein their commands contradicted the Lord’s, were duties incumbent upon you. But, if on the contrary, you mocked, despised, or cursed them, and were disobedient to their lawful commands, you sinned ; and thereby incurred the displeasure of God.—Have you done no murder ? If you have taken away the life of another, without being commissioned by the laws of the land, or of war, or necessity

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cessity in point of self-defence, you are guilty. Or if you have so hated any as to wish them dead or damned; by the one you murdered their bodies, and by the other their souls: for he that *hateth his brother is a murderer*.—And how far you have been guilty of committing adultery, your own conscience, if you have any, can tell. But if that be senseless and silent, you will hear and know another day; for *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*. And if you never committed outward acts; yet, if you intended it, but were prevented against your mind, the will was taken for the deed: as he who *so looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her in his heart*. And if to the design, you added the deed, how great is your criminality!—Have you kept yourself from stealing? If you have taken another's property without his consent, (except so much food as was at that time absolutely necessary to save your life) you sinned. Or if you lied to raise the price of your own property or to sink that of others, it was, in effect, to steal. And if you took advantage of another's ignorance, you thereby deprived him of his right.—Have you borne false witness against your neighbour, either by designedly giving a false verdict, or by reporting untruths to the prejudice of his person or property?—Have you been content with your own things; not coveting your neighbour's house, wife, servant, maid, ox, ass, or any thing that was his?

If in any or all of these things you have sinned, what a wretched condition are you in! How liable to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire! God, who cannot lie, has solemnly said, that he will reward every one according to his works. You cannot then, so dying, expect to escape the damnation of hell. And if you had any sense of your sins, you would

would find them cause of the deepest distress, and most imminent danger. Your case would appear so deplorable, that all the calamities incident to life, would be trifles compared to it: For a wounded spirit, and a fearful looking-for of judgment, who can bear!—And yet dreadful as this sense is; in order to prevent your damnation, it must be: for he who does not fear the wrath of God, must feel it. There is no other remedy; as none will look for deliverance before they know their danger. While they remain insensible of the sinfulness of sin, they sleep secure. To such, the revelation of God's wrath, the severity of his justice to inflict it, the sincerity of his threatening to enforce the infliction, the shortness and uncertainty of life, with the substance and circumstances of eternal torments, are nothing. Evident then it is, that sin, wrath, and hell, must become sensible to the sinner as a motive to induce to seek for mercy, or he will sleep secure till death and damnation arrest and bereave him of all hope and happiness for ever. With what propriety then does the Apostle say, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!"

But as mercy was procured by the passion of Christ, let us inquire how far you have profited by it. You have largely shared in that of long-suffering. The sins of your youth were sufficient to separate betwixt you and the Lord for ever. And if you added the evils of middle age, and the madnesses of maturity; if the Lord had not been long-suffering, you had now been floating in the flames of hell fire!

But what effect has it had? Who by long-suffering has been led to repent and reform? Alas! in many, how little fruit of mercy appears, except that they are kept from hell for a season! How-

ever, hereby they witness that the Lord is slow to wrath, and of great kindness; has bowels of compassion for the rebellious, bearing long with their behaviour, and waiting for their return. Yea, so contrary is the misery of man to the Most High, that he says, he swears, he has no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn and live. This is the word and the will of God. But what will it profit them who persist in sin? Long-suffering, in that case, will only serve to increase their damnation. Alas then for those who abuse that mercy by sinning out all their days! Better had it been for them not to have been born or cut off at an earlier period. But why does the madness of men prevail against their best interest? What do they promise themselves in the ways of wickedness? There is no peace for them who oppose their own consciences. And when conscience is seared, tho' they sleep secure, yet their damnation slumbereth not. Hell from beneath is moved to meet them at their coming; destruction, if they continue in sin, will be the consequence; for sin and suffering are inseparable. However, as the thread of life is yet lengthened out, let that which has long been neglected, now be executed. Choose the better part. Put away the accursed thing. Die to all that is offensive to God, and detrimental to man. Let this be done, whatever remains undone. A reformed life is the first step toward heaven. And if that never be taken, all the rest must remain untaken for ever. Nor can the least delay be without infinite danger, as the continuance of life, to a sinner, is exceeding uncertain: He lies wholly at the mercy of an offended God. If then you linger, remember Lot's wife! She escaped from the city of destruction, but reached not that of refuge. And if death seize you in sin, you are undone for ever.

ever. O consider this! Death will separate you from all your friends, profits, and pleasures. You will then be a stranger in a strange land. And if when you close your eyes in this world, your soul awake in hell, what anguish will take hold of you! Oh how you will wish that you had been wiser! But too late! No help comes in hell. No change will pass there but from bad to worse. The damnation of your soul will be succeeded with that of your body. Ere long the trump of God will sound, and all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come to judgment. Then the books will be opened; the book of God's remembrance, and of man's conscience, and every one's condition be determined according to the things contained therein. Every sinner will then know his own sins, and be known of others. Yea, the spring as well as end of actions will appear: for the secrets of all hearts will be laid open. Those evil designs, which for want of time, place, opportunity, &c. were never ripened into action, and which were never repented of, will be considered as actual evils. And the nature and number of more obvious ones will also be produced, before angels and men. Oh! what a scene of sin will then be opened!—The mercies of God too, as a provision prepared for mankind, but abused by impenitent persons, will, no doubt; confront the offenders. Jesus Christ, the meriting cause of all, with his wounded side, pierced hands and feet, will exhibit to human view, how infinitely he loved them, when he laid down his life to redeem them: The Holy Ghost, the great efficient of all holy habits of heart, and helper in all the difficulties of life: Promises and reproofs, the ministry by which they were taught, and the providence of God that preserved them: Their own consciences, admonitions and instruc-

tions from others, and whatever beside that concurred to do them good, will evidence in that awful day, against all finally impenitent persons. Yea, God, the Judge of all, who was privy to their public and private ways, will, as well witness against, as condemn them for what they have done. Nor will they be able to answer one thing in a thousand charged upon them. Rather, they will concur with the accusation, and condemn themselves; for every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to God. The sentence will then take place, and that will be the beginning of eternal sorrows!

And oh! what a dreadful condition will they be in, when the Lord consigns them to dwell with devouring fire! How they will weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth! What a guilty remembrance will they have of sabbaths neglected and profaned; that, instead of prayer, reading, hearing, &c. they squandered them away in idleness, diversions, covetous practices, or something that was not good! They will call to mind the time wasted in cards, dress, feasting and drinking, &c. which should have been spent in working out salvation, and serving a gracious God. And, for laughter and lewd songs, they will have weeping and mourning. And oh! how the wretches will roar for the disquietness of their souls! The lovers of pleasure will be pained for their dancings and other sensual delights. They who delighted in gay or costly apparel, will have garments suited to their hellish situation. The miser, whose god was gold, shall feed on wrath treasured up in hell, by serving that idol. The drunkard will drink of the cup of God's indignation, without mixture of mercy. The whoremonger will be stung with remorse at the remembrance of the evils done to himself and others. The swearer and liar, the back-biter and
dissembler,

dissembler, the evil-talker and tale-bearer; will have their tongues tormented in that flame. The unjust and cruel, the oppressor of man or beast, the wronger of the fatherless and widow, and, in one word, all that have lived and died in sin, will suffer according to the nature, and proportionable to the number, of their sins. An aggravating circumstance of which is, the endlessness of their torments: Fire and brimstone, burning without ease and without end, will be the portion of all the impenitent. Their consciences will also upbraid them with their rebellions. A lost heaven too will keep them in mind of their madness, in preferring temporal profit or pleasure, to the Lord's salvation and service. And the fiery deluge ever urging, will enhance the whole evil. This will be done to all who know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. O miserable wretches! What would they give to be upon their trial again! But that cannot be, as heaven once lost can never be recovered. Hence, the despair of the damned! Hope, that comes to all, comes not in hell! Cut off effectually and for ever from all that is good, they are fixed in eternal evil! Then will the Lord be as unrelenting in wrath, as they were in sinning. O evil of evils! Cursed then is that man or woman who has sinned! And doubly cursed are they who neglect salvation from it! The damnation of sinners does not slumber; and the damnation of neglecters is sure! O sinners consider this, lest the Lord tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver! If he begin, he will soon make an end. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you may die, and then you are undone, yea, damned for ever!

This is misery complete. But who, while the lamp of life holds out, would not, if possible, prevent

vent it? If any thing deserve a serious thought, this does; all else being nothing compared to it. And what does the Lord require? Surely no great, much less an impossible thing. When a wicked man turneth from his wickedness, he shall save his soul alive. This is his language. If then thy conscience is awake, be faithful to its frowns. Let it speak, how stern and menacing soever it be. Be not afraid to hear the worst it can say. It will speak ere long, thy leave unasked. O hear it now, while there is hope! In hell, if stifled till then, it will speak in hopeless stings and unrelenting lashes, for ever! Now give it scope, and follow its guidance. Its dictates are sacred. It speaks the language of the Lord, being his umpire placed in thy breast, that from thyself thou mayest learn his will: It arbitrates between. Attend then to its teachings. And if thy old uncanceled sins come to thy remembrance, and by the judgment of thy conscience thou art condemned for them; oh! think not that they will forsake thee, but by an act of oblivion from the Lord. Forget them thou mayest; but if they remain in the book of God's remembrance, notwithstanding the interval of ease and unconcernedness, eternity will be thy remembrancer, and teach thee their nature and number. If then thou wouldest not for ever lie under the lashes of a guilty conscience, suffer all that is necessary to make thee abhor thyself and repent unfeignedly. Short pain is better than long. Were then thy feelings equal to those of the damned; yet the circumstance of their being short-lived, is enough to give them the preference: as such, let the remembrance of thy sins be grievous, and their burden intolerable. Bow under the yoke of a guilty mind; and, if need be, go mourning all the day long. Sorrow well becomes a sinner. If thou couldst

couldst weep tears of blood for offending a great and good God, for destroying thyself, and, perhaps, contributing much to the destruction of many, it would be but a slight sign of the sinfulness of thy sin. And sure it is, if thou hadst a right sense of thy sins, thy sorrow would not be small. Thou wouldst consider them as so many instances of opposition to the Almighty; to him who is able to stop thy breath, and dismiss thee to the Devil. This would teach thee what it is to provoke him. Let a milder method have the same effect. Now acknowledge thy offences with brokenness of heart, and with a severe censure of thyself. And let this be followed with an unfeigned and full reformation. Reverse thy former self; for idle and evil language, speak soberly, righteously, and godly. Reverence thyself, by withholding thy lips from whatever may defile them. Do justice to thy neighbour, by true, edifying, and obliging language. Honour God by a solemn use of his name, and by adverting to his presence as a restraint on thyself, that thou offend not with thy tongue.—Let all thy works, according to thy power, be such as thou canst approve to thy own conscience, as may tend to thy neighbour's profit, and the honour of the Lord. These only are signs of a true repentance and a right reformation.

Further. If thou wouldst prevent thy destruction, then consider for whose sake thou art to be forgiven. If thy trust be in repentance and reformation, they will fail thee; being neither the cause, nor whole condition of forgiveness. They are not the meritorious cause, inasmuch as they make no atonement. Was it ever known, that any discharged their debts, by being sorry for them and ceasing to contract more? If any were indebted to you, you would expect another sort of discharge than that. Think not
then

then that the Lord will be satisfied with sorrow and forsaking of sin. His justice claims full payment from thyself or surety. But thou hast no merit, nothing to bring to atone for thy sins. Thy tears, sighs, sorrows, &c. give nothing to God as a requital for them. Settle it then in thy heart, and be assured that thou canst do nothing for which the Lord will forgive thee. But help is laid upon one that is mighty; *God was in his Son reconciling the world to himself.* This is the ground on which thy sinking soul's anchor must fix, and on which it may safely remain. Hence, be confident, that if thou findest favour with God, it will be for his sake alone.—Nor is repentance and reformation the whole *condition* of thy acceptance. They remove the hindrance, but do not interest in the merit of Christ. That is faith, productive of such endeavours after the benefits of his merit, as give actual possession of them. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. By him all that believe are justified from all things. And whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* These are declarative, not only of the mean, believing; but also of the end, salvation. Faith then in the promise, producing earnest prayer to the promiser, and a diligent use of other means, is the condition on which the blessing is suspended, and in the way of which, it is given. This method, rightly taken; taken without a title of meritorious dependance on, and looking through it as a mean in order to the end, will be succeeded with salvation. Which being obtained; the love of God, a sense of his favour, by peace and joy, is shed abroad in the heart. The quality of the soul too, in its tempers and affections, is restored to a right state; and, thereby, a preparation for presenting to God, a living, holy, acceptable service, is obtained. Faith then is the way,

way, and acceptance the end. Nor, on any consideration conclude, that thou art a believer, till thou findest this fruit of thy faith.

And let those who have witnessed this, ask, what returns they have made? The apostle says, *present your bodies a living sacrifice*. Present. Freely ye have received, freely give. Your bodies, your all, in all that you do. Have you been careful to correspond with this command? Have you been moved by the mercy of forgiveness as a motive, and by the principle of grace as the ability, to serve the Lord in all your designs, words, and works? Your offerings lie at your own option. If you will serve the Lord, you may; if not, you may disobey. But consider the obligation you are under. By mercies you were freed from sin and misery. Can you forget, that when you had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave you all? When you deserved hell, he gave you a right to heaven? O consider this, and act accordingly! Be ambitious to please him, who has profited you. A benefactor deserves grateful returns; but a Saviour more. He has saved you from sinking into hell. O be thankful unto him, and speak good of his name. But let your life, as well as lips, speak his praise. Offer a living sacrifice. Act in all things from the principle of life in yourself; walk in the spirit. Instead of a senseless formal service, in things sacred and civil, act with understanding and energy: what you do, do heartily.

This will find work for all your faculties and affections. Your mind must aim at God's honour in imitating his wisdom; your will in choosing agreeable to his goodness; your affections correspond with his power in carrying all into execution. In every thing, whether it concern the Lord or men, have a single eye, a right intention. Let
your

your will, according to your knowledge of the Lord's, be governed thereby; and that will preserve you from sin, and from wounding your soul. Your fear must be wakeful, lest you offend, by a failure of duty; lest you omit or commit; leave undone or do contrary thereto. Love must also have a prevailing influence: your motto must be, *We love him, because he first loved us.* This will make duties and difficulties easy and delightful; his service perfect freedom, and tribulation cause of joy and rejoicing. Thus offer to the Lord the living sacrifice of yourself.

The manner must likewise be attended to. God, who is glorious in holiness, will be served agreeable to himself. Sinister views; temporal profit; honour among men, and whatsoever else that does not tend to the glory of his name, nature, grace, &c. and the spiritual profit of men, must have no place in what you perform. These, if sought by serving the Lord, will spoil your best performances; he will abhor your offerings, account them as strange fire on his altar. Beware too of imperfection in what you do. Be not like those who offered the blind and the lame. Let your heart be holy in the disposition of it; and keep it so by not suffering your animal appetites and desires to gain the ascendancy over your spiritual affections. Your soul resides in a body of flesh, fraught with appetites and senses, which have a lawful use of the things of this life. But when that use is exceeded, especially when it settles into a habit, the soul suffers in its liveliness and activity. Guard then against the fever of animal affection, that the fervour of religious ones may continue and increase. Let your body be servant to your soul, in all that concerns it; that both may serve the Lord. So will your offerings be acceptable to God; agreeable to him here, and rewardable of him hereafter.

EPHESIANS

consideration. And though in working upon rational beings, he acts not as he would do upon things without understanding; in which, as nothing could be retarded through indifference, nor resisted by design; so no concurrence in facilitating the work would be expected. But in imperfect man, there being a disposition which tends to remissness and rebellion; there must be a free choice of future benefits, and care and labour as the effects of grace and free agency, in opposition to the tendency of the remains of unrenewed nature. And,

Where these are not, notwithstanding that the Lord is able, willing, and ready to do all that is needful; he will not be so prodigal of his blessings as to give them to those who neither desire, nor labour for them.—Therefore if some, through prejudice of education, or want of information, or other causes, believe, that the root of rebellious nature will continue till death; it is probable, that it will not be done till the time determined by them. Or if others, better instructed, believe that the Lord can make them complete; yet if their faith does not make them diligently seek it, their profiting will be no more than that of those who do not believe it. Hence it is, that many, notwithstanding the rightness of their faith, remain somewhat wrong in their heart and life. However, believing obedient souls will prove, that the Lord is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

And having done with the explicatory part, it remains to make some use of the whole. And from what has been observed, it is evident, that religion, the religion of those who have sinned,

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consists

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E P H E S I A N S

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consists of an intire change from a sinful to a holy state, both of heart and life. The first cause of which is of grace, and not of works; God, exclusive of all merit in man, and in opposition to his fore-seen evil and deserts of damnation, ordained his Son Jesus Christ to be his Saviour. In consequence of which, the Ephesians, on their believing, obtained the forgiveness of sins, the spirit of adoption, and a title to glory.

Then let all who have sinned, and who profess to believe the gospel, examined whether it has had the same effect on them. If not, to what purpose has it been preached? Surely to an evil one only: For if it is not the savour of life unto life, it will be of death unto death: there being no medium. Who then has obtained the remission of sins, and been sealed by the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption? So the Ephesians were favoured. But who herein can compare with them? Every believer can; true faith and these things being inseparable.—This then is that whereby all professors may prove whether they be in the faith.—But, alas! I fear, but few know what these things mean. The ignorance of many, touching spiritual things, is amazing! When we speak of justification by faith, and of a new-birth by the spirit of God, few know whether they be scriptural things or the issues of a disordered brain. So infatuated are the majority of men!

And whence is this? What makes men mad? Why are they ignorant of things without which it is impossible for them to be saved? Disobedience to the dictates of divine wisdom, does it. Of which, it is probable, there is a concurrence of causes; their own indiscretions, carelessness, wilfulness, &c. evil example, temptations, bad instructions, the want of good ones, &c.

Touching

Touching which, ministers of all denominations, whose experience corresponds not with the gospel, are culpable; for what they do not experimentally know, they either cannot teach at all, or not effectually. Hence it is, that they who only learn the gospel as a system of doctrines, discant on those subjects to no better purpose, than if they treated on matters foreign to religion: The want of life in themselves, makes their doctrine dead to others. This is a general, if not an universal, case. Therefore, though one man is not the first cause of spiritual life to another; yet if his ministrations flow not from life in himself, they will not be successful in quickening others. The reason of which is, either that God will not work by the ungodly, or there is a physical cause, an unfitness in the instrument, or both. And that the Lord does not generally, if at all, in saving souls, work by unholy men, (though the matter of their preaching be such as it ought to be) is manifest from innumerable instances. How then should he work by those whose principle, practice, and preaching are wrong? And this accounts, as one cause, for that calamity which is spread over the land.—Unholy men are admitted into the ministry; who, though they profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them that office; yet generally are ignorant of, and at enmity with, what they profess; calling inspiration cant, enthusiasm, and what not that is bad. But if it be true, that, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and that the spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;* and if, for sinister ends men profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach; and when that end is answered, deny the whole affair; what sort of fruit are we to expect from the preaching of such?

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Why, truly, such as generally appears, viz. ignorance and ungodliness.

The whole ministry too, of many, is an evidence of this: the doctrines of the gospel being almost universally deserted; few giving them any place in their sermons. Hence it is little less than a miracle to find one who lays no other meritorious foundation than Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners.—And as a wise master-builder insists, in the case of those who have sinned, on the necessity of being forgiven through faith in Christ Jesus.—And where the heart is corrupt, worldly and wicked, pointing out the absolute need of an inward and universal change from a sinful to a holy state.—With, as a consequence of the whole, a life wholly devoted to God and the good of mankind.

These doctrines are so necessary, that whoever inculcates the contrary, are false teachers and deceivers of men. But they abound; and, therefore, are a general cause of the ignorance and wickedness of men. And at whose hands, no doubt, their souls will be required.

However, as the persons so deceived have other assistances which they abuse, they will be justly punished for their own offences also.

Forasmuch then as false doctrine, and other evils have corrupted the majority of men; have blinded their minds, hardened their hearts, and rendered sin natural, easy, and agreeable; to live a life condemned by the law of God, and which tends to eternal damnation, is no cause of concern to them. Salvation, the service of God, and heaven, they see no beauty in. Sin, death, hell, and damnation, they treat as trifles. All their concern is about earthly things; so if their bodies, families, friends, business, &c. are but in a prosperous way, all is well. Whether their soul be in

a right or a wrong condition, they know not; and whether they shall be saved or damned when they die, they care not.

But what a wretched return do they thereby make to the Lord for his benefits; in particular, for the gift of his son, and the grace of his spirit! Now as these are the most excellent things, and intended to answer the most important purposes; with what thankfulness should they be received, and with what diligence and devotion should they be used, to answer the ends for which they are given! But, alas! the wilful ignorance of many, who shut their eyes against the light; the indisposition of more, who will be at no pains to work out their salvation; the fearfulness of some, who will not bear persecution; the obstinacy of abundance, who hate to be reformed; and the pride of not a few, who, esteeming themselves righteous, will not submit to the righteousness of faith, prevent the good effects of it, whereby myriads of souls are lost everlastingly.

Now who that considers these things can forbear expostulating with these ignorant, lazy, fearful, obstinate, proud, deceived, ruined children of men, who, for they know not what, deprive themselves of what is of more value, and affords more satisfaction, than all earthly things. O ye sons of night, how long will you love darkness better than light? How long will you shut your eyes against the light which shines on every side? The light of revelation, which, read with understanding, exhibits in the clearest point of view, the evil of sin, the danger of damnation, and the way of salvation. The light of creation and providence breaks forth in full blaze to inform you of the wisdom, power, and goodness of him with whom you have to do, and by whom you must be judged. This rolling earth,

perpetually whirls for the good of its inhabitants. A wonder this surpassing wonder ! The sun, moon, and stars too blazen forth upon poor benighted man, to guide him through the wild career of life. Creatures also of various kinds, cover the earth for ornament and use. And all conspire to teach him there is a God, and to provoke him to adore him. The light of the sun of righteousness also shines, to irradiate his mind, and shew him all that concerns him ; to convince him of the evil of sin, of the vanity of the creature, and to point out the way he should walk in. But consciousness of sin, which obtains with all ; how short lived with most ! The rattle and noise of things without, with the ignorance and rebellion of things within, chase away, like a frightened hart, that concern which foolish man watches not over as misers do their gold. And curst, doubly curst will he be, who preserves it not at the expence of all other things, when they or it must be forsaken. Riches, honours, pleasures, what are they compared with pardon, peace, and heavenly joys ? A world so bought would be by far too dear ! Alas then for those who suffer the cares, pleasures, or profits of life to prevail against the salvation of their soul ! How great the evil ! What can recompence them in time or in eternity ! No created good can do it. And what can hell afford the unholy ? The sweets of life obtain not there. Fire and brimstone must be their portion for the follies of a few fleeting moments spent in opposition to God in the way to eternity. Oh, the madness of men thus to barter the best for the worst of things ! This is the evil of evils, the sorest evil under the sun ! For were men but safe in respect of the future world, whatever they suffered in the present, would be very insignificant. But, alas ! when their whole
life

life serves only to prepare them to dwell where the worm dyeth not, and where the fire is not quenched, it is dreadful beyond expression! O who can sufficiently lament their case! Wretched souls! what will they do in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment!

But though many sleep and are insensible of their danger; yet others are conscious of their condition, they know that without a present, they have neither a right to, nor a qualification for, a future salvation.

To them belongs the promise of forgiveness; which the Lord will fulfill, if sought in the manner prescribed by himself. The ground of this confidence is, that Jesus hath died for sinners: therefore justice is satisfied, pardon procured, and he is faithful and just to forgive. Believe the promise then, and plead for the pardon. And how needful is this, in the case of a criminal? By mercy alone can such be made free. And surely for so great a favour, nothing within the compass of your power, is too much to be done, to put you in possession of it.—*They shall seek me and find me, saith the Lord, when they search for me with all their heart.* Who then may expect the blessing? Not the careless, but the diligent seeker. If so, how dangerous to be indifferent! It is destructive; it makes multitudes stop short of the blessing. If therefore you would not abide in bondage, nor turn back to folly; seek earnestly and perseveringly, till you prevail. Nor will less preserve you from evil. Your mind is always in motion: therefore if not earnestly urged heavenward; it will, so far as it fails of that, incline to, and pursue the world. Can you then be dilatory, and do well? No. Perhaps you have long sought his salvation. Why have you not found it? Do not say, it never was his will to give

give it; forbear to make him a liar, when he says, *every one that seeketh findeth*. You have not then because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. It is said, *many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*. Therefore, it is added, *Myonziab*, strive as in an agony. So Christ prayed. And your case is more urgent than his. If you were condemned to be hanged, how earnest would you be to have it revert! You are condemned to be damn'd! And can you be easy under it? Will you be easy in hell? I suppose not. That will stir you—and stir you in vain; for you will find neither mercy, nor mitigation of misery. Let a sense of your danger have the same effect, and to better purpose; make you flee from the wrath to come while you may. Perhaps you will say, is not salvation by faith, without works? Yes, without the merit of works; but not by a faith which does not work. You believe the Lord gives good things to them that ask. Ask then; and take heed that you ask not amiss. Ask in faith; believing that you shall, and you will be blest. And ask, till you receive.

And let those who experience forgiveness, and the evidence of their sonship in the witness and fruit of the spirit, rejoice in being so favoured. And to promote prosperity, embrace the apostle's advice: *Go on to perfection*; which is indispensably necessary. For, being weak in every grace of the spirit; not only temptations from without will have more weight by reason of some affinity with evils within, but the evils themselves, will, with great difficulty, be kept down. However, having a promise of being strengthened; if you use the means appointed for improvement in the measure and manner you may, you cannot fail of having it fulfilled.—But expect not to prosper but by so doing. So far as you neglect, you will not only fail of growing

growing in grace; but, it is highly probable, your evidence of acceptance will be impaired, and spiritual strength diminished. For, although it is possible to continue, in effect, in the same condition, by sometimes gaining and sometimes losing; yet, perhaps, the reason why so few retain these is, they do not sufficiently seek to increase them. Hence, some turn prodigals, others remain unprofitable, and but few go on to perfection.

How necessary then to be earnest and active, seeing that remissness is the bane of religion: It is like laying a foundation without building upon it, whereby it perisheth. As such, whoever would make much proficiency, must see that no opposition be offered; for a heart ruffled by the rising or unruliness of its passions, &c. is neither disposed to seek nor receive suitable things. Anger, ambition, joy, sorrow, love, hatred, hope, fear, &c. when they are evil, must be kept under continual restraint; and when they are good, if they be excessive, they carry the soul out of that composure which is best calculated for its growth in goodness. Nor must ideas of external things, beyond what is absolutely necessary for the affairs of life, be suffered to possess and employ the mind. The wanderings of the imagination, and the flights of fancy, must also be restrained by a continual advertance to, and staying and exercising the mind on, the most high and spiritual things.

Words also, especially of a worldly kind must be few, and actions regular; lest the abundance of the one, and the irregularity of the other, unhinge the heart and hinder the divine operation. To which must be added, gratitude for temporal and spiritual benefits; with much inward and earnest prayer for the increase of every grace of the spirit; and such a use of all other ordinances as may
answer

answer the end of them, viz. to engage the soul with God in its actings, and to conform it to his holiness. And, to crown the whole with success, perseverance therein is absolutely necessary; for if the soul is not continually kept up to, and exercised in these things, what it gains by earnestness at one time, it loses by carelessness at another; and so makes no real proficiency. But by a faithful prosecution of promised benefits, it will grow strong in goodness; and, as consequences, Christ will dwell more sensibly in it; it will be rooted and grounded in love to God and man; and comprehend, in a higher degree, the breadth, &c. of his love to it. Which being an advance towards the highest pitch of purity; let it be retained and improved to the blessed state of a perfect mind, that you may be thoroughly furnished for every duty, and habitually prepared for heaven. Then will your heart be holy and happy, and your life, if you live up to the grace given, will correspond with the law, and be a constant source of satisfaction in the testimony of a good conscience, and in the hope of a reward in heaven.

But to retain this fulness is as necessary as to obtain it. And to prevent mistakes, remember that the tempers and affections of the soul are not destroyed, but only renewed; therefore not inconsistent with a fulness of God. Hence then they must both be governed, and rightly exercised on their respective objects. The bodily senses and appetites, must also be restrained and kept in proper subordination to the soul, that it be not ensnared by them. Beware likewise of mistaking temptations for sin, that you may not cast away your confidence, without cause. Temptations, if resisted and overcome, go off and leave no guilt behind. But sin is succeeded with guilt. Judge
of

of them then by their effects, and conclude accordingly. And to maintain peace and purity, live in a faithful discharge of duty; act in all things with understanding and energy; let your whole mind, and strength be employed in living to the praise of God, and the profit of men; so shall you have a good conscience here, and a crown of glory hereafter. Blessed then are they who are perfect in principle and in practice!

JOHN

JOHN, Chap. v. Ver. 28, 29.

Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall bear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.

IF the ensuing discourse, exceed the common limits of a sermon, it will be only what I intend. In the prosecution of which I shall give a short explication of the text, and then improve upon it.— And here our Lord takes notice of two sorts of people, and predicts what shall be done to both. He first speaks of them that do good, &c. Now doing good, pre-supposes a moral preparation of mind; in which, two things are implied: First, the acceptance of our person; and, secondly, the right state of the inward principle.

The acceptance of our person, is either through perfect obedience to the law of God, or by the pardon of our sins through faith in Christ Jesus. The right state of the mind, is a conformity to God in holiness of disposition, including all the graces of the spirit in perfection; and is the effect of the grace of God early given, or of being renewed by the Holy Ghost. By these there is a preparation for every good word and work.

And,

And, first, *Doing good*, has respect to God, in serving him in the manner prescribed by himself; praising him for his excellencies, being grateful for his benefits, walking in his fear as a preservative from offences, and keeping, with a loving delight, all his commandments. Secondly, it refers to mankind, in relieving them according to their several necessities; feeding the poor, cloathing the naked, reproofing the wicked, instructing the ignorant, and doing to all men as we would be done to, touching soul, body, and estate.

The reward is, *a resurrection to life*. By continuing in well doing till the season of life sees an end, the soul will attain to the excellent condition of being embodied with the blest, the spirits of just men made perfect, in the paradise of God. And, at the last day, the body will be raised from the grave, and be made like the glorious body of Christ; when, after becoming the receptacle of the soul, both will be received into the heavenly habitation, and enjoy that rapturous delight, denoted by life; a happiness proportioned to the nature and degree of the good they have done.

The second part of the subject is, *They that do evil*. Now that which renders it possible, is, first, free-agency, a liberty to act according to the inward principle of grace or otherwise; and, consequently, to keep or to break the commandments of God. The misuse of this ability, turned innocent angels into sinners and devils, and out of heaven into hell. It made Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, which brought death and a dismission from paradise upon them. Yea, from the time of the creation till now, it has been, in respect of every individual of mankind, the first personal cause of sin in the practice, and of depravity in the principle. The second cause is, sin and depravity

pravity themselves; the one serving as a rule, and the other as a principle, whereby to continue and increase them. And by how much sin becomes habitual, and the evil principle is increased, by so much the sinner is carried on by a constraining force, a powerful impetuosity in the ways of wickedness; and by necessary consequence, his freedom to good is proportionably decreased, and sinning rendered natural, easy, and agreeable.

To *Do evil*, is, first, to sin against God, by omitting any part of the duty he requires in respect of himself; and, secondly, to commit such things, as, in the same case, he forbids to be done. It likewise signifies to sin against mankind, by tempting them to, or by omitting to prevent them from, sinning; and, also, by injuring their persons, hurting their credit, or by depriving them of their property.

The reward for doing evil, is the *Resurrection to damnation*. Dying in sin, ensures this; for then the soul will descend to the devil, and the body rest in dire expectation of being raised to eternal torments. Agreeable to which, when that dread day of decision comes, sinners will hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; by that powerful voice, new bodies shall rise out of the ashes of the old; which, being constituted spiritual and immortal, and repossess of their sinful souls; the whole man will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to be judged according to the nature and the number of their sins, and to be sentenced to a proportionable degree of damnation.

And having thus given a general hint of what is contained in the text; I shall, in the further prosecution of it, enlarge, by way of use, on the several particulars.

And,

And, first, is it necessary to be in a state of acceptance with, and to have the moral image of, God, in order to do good? Both scripture and experience shew it to be absolutely and indispensably so; inasmuch as they clearly evidence, the one by plain and pertinent passages, and the other by an inward guilty sense, that God is angry with the wicked, and that the whole service of a sinner is an abomination to him. Nor, can their case be otherwise conceived of; for how should they or their works be agreeable to God, while they continue in a condition for which he condemns them to damnation? And yet it is so with all sinners. A sinner then, considered as such, is no more agreeable to God, nor can serve him with better acceptance, than satan; for his sin subjects him to God's wrath, and the evil disposition of his mind being the principle of all his actions, it does not, it cannot submit to his law. This is the sinner's case; and a truth of the last importance to be known by all who would be prepared to do good; seeing that while they are not, their works neither please God, nor give a right to the resurrection to life.

Nor are these necessary things such as a man cannot have a sense of; rather, they are such as cannot be had without a sense of them. In the case of sinners, they are never sought, consequently never found, till there is a sense of the want of them. That sense implies guilt and fear; guilt for what is past, and fear for what is to come. And these sensations are such as none who have them can be insensible of. And when sin, which is the cause of them, is removed by remission and an inward renewal, there is a contrary sense; a sense implying peace and purity; which gives confidence and hope; confidence of being acquitted

from all that is past, and of being purified, the inward principle now producing love to and delight in God, and a lively expectation of living with him in glory everlasting. This is the sense which is inseparable from that condition which qualifies a sinner to serve the Lord.

And forasmuch as this is the ground of good works; let us examine those things which many seem to depend on as right and rewardable, without that ground.

And, first, to begin with that, which, if the ignorance of many did not render necessary, would not deserve a serious consideration; I mean, the being *Born in a country, or of parents, called Christian*. And yet so senseless are some, as to suppose, that names and natures are inseparable; that because they are called Christians, they are such. Hence it is, that when many are asked a reason of their hope of heaven, their answer is, "We are Christians." So the Jews boasted of being "Abraham's seed;" and supposed that was sufficient to silence all objections. For the same reason they asserted, That "Abraham sits near the gates of hell, and suffers no Israelite to go thither." But, surely, there needs no argument to prove, that names are nothing; that whether a man be called a Christian, a Jew, a Turk, or a Heathen, it is the same in the account of God, if his heart and life are wrong; that he who is no respecter of persons, is none of names, when they are not sure signs of correspondent natures. To evidence this, a simple similitude will suffice. Suppose then the name of a lion were given to a lamb? Would that principle the lamb with the lion's nature, and produce his roar? No; it would retain its native properties, and give the same significant sign as if called by its own name. So, a sinner, one that
lives

lives without the fear and love of God, and takes no care of his soul, but spends his time about temporal things; and, not content with neglecting salvation, hurries on in the way to hell, by cursing, swearing, lying, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, whoring, and other abominable things, is not to be accounted a Christian, because he is so called. Surely then it is the greatest abuse of words, for any to pretend to be Christians, on the score of being born in a Christian country. So this may be, without Christianity.

Nor is the favour and image of God sure to all who have been *Baptized*. The greatest part of the people of this nation have been baptized; and yet a great majority of them are as contrary to Christianity in their conduct, as they can be; and therefore, deserve no better name than "baptized diabolians." Yea, whether the ordinance be administered in infant or adult age, the case is the same, as it is manifest that many of the first, and some of the second sort, bear no real marks of Christianity. Their actions are inconsistent therewith; they do not renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; rather, they renounce all that is right, and live in all that is wrong: as such, they are so far from being Christians, that they are the children of the devil; for his works they do.

Neither is an outward proof of not being a Christian necessary; inasmuch as a man may be a sinner in the sight of God, without that: For, sin does not lie in the act only, but in the intention also. If any would do wickedly, but want time, opportunity, power, &c. the will is taken for the deed; as, *he that hateth his brother, if he never hurt him with his hand, is a murderer.* Yea,

where the practice gives a presumptive proof of a pious principle, it does not imply a positive one; because a man may be an hypocrite or a formalist, act piously in appearance from an impious principle, or have the form without the power of religion. Now baptism, in any of these cases, is no more a sign of being a Christian, than it was in the case of Simon Magus; who, notwithstanding his being baptized, was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Let then their outward condition be what it will, whether foul or fair, wicked or like a whited wall, if they have not the inward principle of the Lord's love and likeness, baptism answers no other end than a condemning ordinance, the being washed to fouler steans.

Hence it is, that they who are washed with water, but not from their wickedness, are in no better a condition under the Christian, than they who were circumcised in the flesh but not in the spirit, were under the Jewish dispensation. With as much sense then might a wicked or a formal Jew have boasted of his outward cutting as a mark of belonging to the Lord, as a drunken, swearing, lying, whoring, sabbath-breaking, cheating, covetous, formal Christian, of his being sprinkled with or plunged in water. But as the carnal Jew was no better for his outward badge, but rather, through a misuse of it, incurred greater condemnation; so neither does the wicked Christian gain any thing by baptism, save more guilt and greater damnation.

And if this want any confirmation, the apostle's argument, in the case of some of the circumcised, applied to many of the baptized, will be sufficient: *Circumcision* (saith he) *verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.* Circumcision was

a sign of the covenant made with Abraham, and gave them a right to all the benefits of it, if they kept the commandments contained in it. But if instead of serving the Lord, they sinned against him; their circumcision should be made uncircumcision, should not be a sign of being in that covenant, nor of having the benefits of it. Now this is the case with all sinful Christians; their baptism is rendered abortive, and they are no better for it.

The apostle then proceeds to shew who is a Jew, and what is circumcision; which, applied to the Christian, and to baptism, will bear a similar sense. *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.* Neither is he a Christian who is one but outwardly; nor is that baptism which belongs to the body only; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, by having Christ formed in his heart, in holy tempers and affections, the hope of glory; and baptism is that of the spirit, the being purified by the Holy Ghost and having the witness and fruit of the spirit, and an earnest of heaven. This is that which belongs to, or is inseparable from, baptism; and which whoever has not, is not a Christian; *for if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Hence, it is clear, that what was implied in the truly circumcised, is in the truly baptized; and what was wanting in the falsely circumcised, is in the falsely baptized. Now the circumcision which the Lord approved, is explained by his promise: *I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, that thou mayest love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.* This was the circumcision of which that in the flesh, was but

but the sign; and where the substance was not, the sign was insignificant. Therefore is it said, *beware of the concision*, of those who had but the outward cutting. To which is opposed, *for we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit*, that is, love, serve, and delight in him. And, to baptism, similar effects are to be ascribed: for, *baptism*, saith St. Peter, *doth now save us*. The nature of which salvation, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. It is not the effect of any outward washing, but the fruit of an inward cleansing, the answer of a good conscience. A good conscience, as the effect of any thing that saves, (which baptism is here said to do) is a conscience at peace with God; as, on the contrary, an evil conscience, is a guilty one. When then we are said to have *our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, it means being delivered from condemnation, whereby the conscience becomes good towards God. This is the effect of forgiveness; which, in the primitive days, had a close connection with baptism, either as the reason of their being baptized, or, as the immediate fruit of it. When *Cornelius* and his company had received the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, they were baptized, Acts x. 48. And when the *Three Thousand* were pricked at the heart, and said, *What must we do?* Peter replied, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii. 38. Thus remission and regeneration were the attendants of baptism, and were the proof of persons properly baptized. All who had not these were counterfeit Christians, brothers to the concision, and did not worship God in the spirit, nor rejoice in Christ Jesus. And thus it is in the present time: All who are not in the love

love and likeness of God, are not Christians; and therefore their baptism is no better than a broken reed; on which, if they lean, having no better support, they will sink into endless sufferings. Baptism then may be, without Christianity.

And as baptism is of no signification, so neither is *Confirmation*, without the favour and image of God; inasmuch as none can be confirmed in that which they have not. If then, at baptism, "you were made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and if you continued in that condition till the time of confirmation, you might be confirmed in them. But if not, it was impossible. And, I fear, you give but little proof of being a member of Christ's mystical body, by having his heavenly life in your heart, and by walking as he also walked. And yet nothing less could either constitute you a Christian or be a proper ground of confirmation.—Nor, I presume, did you give any better proof of being a child of God, by having his spirit bearing witness with your spirit, that you were his. If that had been proposed as the proof of your preparation for confirmation; alas, how unprepared had it proved you to be: for, it is probable, you knew no more of it, than of that which never had a being. But nothing less than that witness, is sufficient to afford satisfaction. Nor is any thing but that from which it flows, sufficient for salvation.—Neither, I doubt, had you any sense of the signification of being an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, by having a heaven of grace in your heart, consisting of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and, thereby, an anticipation of a heaven of glory. This is to inherit heaven. Nor is there any other way, in this world, separate from it, that can be of service or comes under a scriptural

scriptural construction of it : All but a present inward, and a foretaste of a future heaven, is but name ! or form ! or profession ! or nothing !

And as these only constitute a Christian, and are inseparable from a qualification for future salvation ; if you neither had the evidence of them in your heart, nor gave a practical proof of them in your life, how could you be confirmed in them ? It could not be ; therefore your confirmation contributed nothing to your conformity to God. Hence then, for want of a better subject, it was but an unmeaning ceremony. As such, if you place any dependance on it, you deceive yourself by leaning on that which cannot support you. Of this you may be confident ; for whatever was done without you, if it neither found nor left you in a right state of mind, was of no more service than nothing ; and therefore no more to be depended on. This then is another thing which a man may have, and yet not be a Christian ; and, consequently, not qualified for doing good. As such, it is of no service to a sinner, and is highly improper in his case, he having nothing but sin to be confirmed in.

The *Sacrament of the Lord's supper*, likewise, may be received without any benefit accruing to the receiver. Its author intended it to be a mean of commemorating his meritorious death ; that by receiving the substituted signs, they should remind themselves, and shew to others, that solemn transaction. This, it is evident, is one end for which it was ordained. Another end to be answered by it, is conveying the benefits of Christ's death to mens minds, in saving them from sin, &c.

To the right receiving of which, in respect of the first design, it is necessary that the receiver be acquainted with his sin, or with his salvation from it. Without the one or the other of these, the sacrament

erament can be no sign of a crucified Saviour. To all who know not the want or the worth of him, he is but a cypher; his name is not precious, his death is unprofitable, and his spirit not desirable: therefore, to them, the sign is wholly insignificant. That it is thus, is as certain as that none can act aright without understanding. But what sense has a sinner, insensible of the nature, and unconcerned about the consequence of his sins, of the want of a Saviour? A Saviour is no more to him, than a physician is to a sound man, or one insensible of his disorder. Seeing then that the sick, and not the whole want a physician; evident it is, that in none but conscious sinners or persons saved from sin, is the first design of the sacrament answered. To all the rest, whatever preparation they make by conning over the words of a book, and however devout they appear at the place of the substituted signs; the sacrament is but a solemn farce, and their whole behaviour therein mere grimace: consequently they do not shew forth his death in what they do.

Neither is the second end of the sacrament answered in such. They press with their teeth, the outward elements; but their carnal hearts having no conception of a spiritual Christ, they do not feed upon him by faith, he is not food to their souls; his blood neither cleanses them from sin, nor his body begets in them spiritual life. And, as this is the principal end of that ordinance; if it has not that effect, it is received in vain; it is to no more purpose than meat and drink would be to a child, if not turned into blood and spirits: For, as it is the spirit, and not the gross matter of food, that benefits the body; so it is not the elements of the sacrament, but the grace or spirit of Christ, (which right receivers obtain) that profits the soul.

Seeing

Seeing then that the body, without the spirit of food, would neither grow, nor continue to live; in like manner, the sacrament, separate from the grace of life, is of no service to the soul.

Nor could the body profit by food, if it was not alive prior to its partaking of it; for where there is no life, there can be neither a continuance nor an increase of it. Agreeable to which, if there be no heavenly life in the heart; there is no sense of the evil of sin, no desire of deliverance from it, no hungnings and thirstings after righteousness, nor dependance on Christ as a Saviour. And, it is evident, that all gross sinners, lovers of pleasure, and persons who have but the form of religion, are in this condition; they are dead to God, asleep in sin, secure in danger, void of fear, without conscience, and destitute of care concerning the soul. In a word, their condition is such as incapacitates them to partake of the benefits of the sacrament; for having no life in themselves, they have no appetite, and so can neither seek nor receive spiritual things. To such it is but a lifeless ceremony, with which they comply, through custom or false conception. Nor does the evil end in this; for they eat and drink to their own condemnation, being guilty of a wretched abuse of the body and blood of Christ, signified by these signs, through their ignorant unmeaning manner of proceeding.

Now it may be presumed, that the generality of receivers are of this sort; that though they sit down to this supper in a formal way; yet they are so dark and dead as not to discern and desire the benefits intended to be received by it. To what purpose then do they partake of it? Alas! how few can give a good account of that! And, therefore, if custom did not throw weight enough into the scale to determine them that way, the presumed benefit
of

of it, would not prevail with many to do it. But fools will be in the fashion; or drunkards, cursers, swearers, liars, sabbath-breakers, whoremongers, proud, passionate, covetous, self-willed people, and every other sort of sinner would not be found at that feast. False conception too, induces a few. They have been told, by those who neither believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, nor consubstantiation, that the sacrament will go far to save them. Hence it is, that they repose as much confidence in it, as if it were the Saviour; and that having received it, they suppose they are safe. Agreeable to which, I remember a famous rider of race-horses, who generally received the sacrament, prior to his riding a race. I suppose, to prepare him for death, in that dangerous way. And many, after living a wicked life, and filling up the measure of their sins; to save them, receive the sacrament, and so leave the world as if all were well with them. It answers the end of an opiate, to keep or to lull them asleep: For while they think it to be what it is not, or believe that receiving it is sufficient, they deceive themselves; and, it is probable, die in a delusion. Thus a regular reception of the sacrament may be, without any degree of Christianity.

Nor does the *external act of charity* carry in it an evidence of being in the favour of God. Much in that way may be done, while the Lord is angry with the doer. *If I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, I am nothing.* This shews how far a man may go in giving, and yet be nothing in the account of God. He may not only give all that he can without hurting himself or embarrassing his circumstances; but all his goods; and not to the rich, but the poor, the proper objects of charity; and, notwithstanding, be no more a Christian, nor acceptable

acceptable to God, than nothing. This is the judgment of the apostle, and it is according to truth; for all gifts, however profitable to the receiver, do not render the giver agreeable to God, if he be not so in himself: the gift does not sanctify the altar, but the altar the gift; the goodness of the gift does not make the giver good, but the goodness of the giver the gift.

And have not charity. Charity, which is the ground of good works, is the grace of love, or a heart divinely disposed to do good. The ground of which disposition, is the divine nature. This is the image of God; which, according to its measure, in whomsoever it is, produceth a benevolent disposition. The reason of it ariseth from the relation it hath to the Lord. God is love; and, therefore, is loving to all, while the day of grace endures. Hence, he provides, in the way of his providence, things pertaining to temporal life. These are scattered with an open hand, so that all, even the evil and unthankful, plentifully partake of them. The same defusive goodness is apparent, in regard of man's immortal part; his grace, which brings salvation, appears to all; and notwithstanding the repeated and perpetuated provocations of sinners, he is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And when, after all his merciful measures, they refuse to repent and reform, he still has no pleasure in their punishment, it is his strange work, a work he unwillingly enters upon. Hence when the Jews had withstood the last effort of his grace, he wept, and wished that they had been wise to know the things that make for peace.

From this disposition and manner of doing in the Deity it is, that we must form a judgment of man, in regard of the grace of charity, he being an
image

image of him in the one, and an imitator of him in the other. He is benevolent and beneficent, wishing well to and blessing men with temporal blessings according to his ability, and contributing all that he can to promote the salvation of their souls. For which, the only reward he looks for in this life, is the testimony of his conscience, the approbation of his Lord, and the pleasing reflection of having profited his fellow-creatures. Herein he finds a satisfaction which more than compensates for every labour of love.

Charity, which does not arise from this root, nor is attended with these circumstances, however extensive, is no proof of the giver being agreeable to God. Yea, without them, he is nothing; nothing good in himself, nor accounted of by the Lord; for his heart is unholy, and he is abhorred of God, who judges not according to outward appearances, but the nature of inward principles: And, therefore, only so far as these agree with his own nature, and man is influenced by them to imitate him in acting, is he any thing.

Now this is the rule whereby to judge of the acceptableness of a man's self and service. If he be in the favour and image of God, it is well, if not, he is not a Christian, nor has the grace of charity; therefore what he gives, is either the effect of pride, or to gain applause, or flows from human sympathy, or is done to obtain the favour of God, and the kingdom of heaven; for so great is the ignorance of some, as to suppose, that by their gifts they can atone for their sins, turn away the wrath of God, and procure a place in his eternal palace. However, it is certain, charity may be to the giving all that a man hath, and yet he not be qualified to serve the Lord; consequently all his giving, as it respects himself, is of no ser-

vice to his soul. So this may be, and yet there be no Christianity.

Neither is a *constant course of prayer*, a proof of being a Christian. Prayer, with many, is only a matter of form; the effect, first, of human instruction; and, secondly, of custom; they were taught it in the time of their infancy, and they know no reason but custom for continuing it. They can say their prayers without any sense of the signification of them; not knowing what is, nor what is not agreeable to their condition; for whether they be saints or sinners, of God or of the devil, heirs of heaven or of hell, they cannot tell. Hence it is, that as they know not their wants, nor what they pray for, so, constantly with their ignorance and want of appetite, they neither expect, nor desire to receive any answer. And thus prayer is made for the sake of itself or for some wrong reason only, and not to answer the end for which the Almighty ordained it; for *he giveth his holy spirit to all them that rightly ask*.

Nor, indeed, do they properly pray to the Lord. They do not address him as one who is present and hears their petitions; as existing without and on every side of them, and as inwardly manifested to the mind. And yet to those who are enlightened and enlivened, or capable of performing the duty of prayer, the sun is not more obvious to the senses of the outward man, than the Lord is to those of the inward; for, as the eye of the body by the beams of the sun discerns its body, and his heat defuses warmth through the whole animal system; in like manner, the light of the Lord shines upon the soul and gives it the knowledge of himself, and his love, prefigured by fire, impregnates the whole inward principle with a heavenly warmth, and creates unspeakable comfort.

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Now they who have not these, or so much of them as to shew the want of more, are blind; so they pray to they know not what, to a God whose essence they understand not, and of whom they have no knowledge in their own souls; and, therefore, they do not pray with the spirit and with the understanding; rather, through their ignorance and deadness, they speak words without knowledge and desire. Hence it is, that of the many who pray, but few receive promised benefits: they have not, not because they do not ask, but because they ask amiss; consequently their labour is lost, and themselves, if they continue in that condition, will be so also.

Contrary to which, prayer, rightly performed, is an immediate and direct approach unto God as a being present with, sensible of, and able, willing, and ready to supply all the wants of the petitioner. In which petition is implied, a sense of the soul's necessities, a desire of having them supplied, faith in the promise of God through Christ Jesus, and sincerity, earnestness, and unweariedness in the application, till the blessing be obtained. And all prayer, unaccompanied with these circumstances, is no better than babbling. It is as senseless as for one man to ask a favour of another whom he does not know, whose presence he is not sensible of, to whom he does not direct what he says, nor knows the nature, nor the necessity of what he asks, nor desires to receive it. Now if the person, thus petitioned, were sensible of it, would he not conclude the petitioner to be either a fool or a madman, and himself shamefully dealt with? And yet, I fear, in no wiser, nor better a way do most men pray. But this is their foolishness, and the fruit of it is accordingly, it being a mere mockery of the Most High, a matter of delusion to themselves,

a labour intirely lost, and cause of greater condemnation.

And to no better purpose did many of the Pharisees pray. They made many and long prayers; and yet were as far from being really religious as the publicans and harlots, who, it is probable, prayed not at all. Therefore for that as well as for their other formalities, they received the greater damnation. And the same is notorious in the present time; many, perhaps most who pray, are in similar circumstances; they honour the Lord with their lips, but are ignorant of him in their hearts. Hence their prayers are unprofitable, they bring no blessing; it is to them, in that respect, as if they prayed not. But though they gain nothing, yet their senseless supplications subject them to the fore evil of being condemned as well for their duties as for their diabolical deeds. A course of formal senseless prayer then, is no proof of being a Christian; but, on the contrary, an evident indication of neither being nor desiring to be one: Such are dead to God, and therefore not prepared to do good.

Nor is a *regular and constant attendance on public worship*, a proof of being qualified to do good. Many who frequent there, are as ignorant of true religion, and as wicked as they could be, if they did not attend. Neither, I presume, do they know why they go as it concerns the soul. Their practice gives too great a proof of this; which being an ignorant pursuit of earthly things as the only profit they propose to themselves, mixed with oaths, idle speeches, vain pleasures, and an excessive gratification of their senses and appetites; it is a course as incompatible with any degree or desire of Christianity, as light is with darkness.—Nor, indeed, can the diversions of the age, which most allow

low and indulge themselves in, be reconciled with the way of salvation. Who can play at cards, sing irreligious songs, dance, go to balls, plays, horse-courses, &c. and be working out his salvation with fear and trembling, by repentance, faith, prayer, sighs, groans, &c. None; for they differ as widely as heaven and hell.—Nor would it be wiser than lighting a taper to illuminate the sun, to offer proof that a state of salvation and a life of sin or senseless diversions, cannot consist together. It is self-evident; for they carry in them an intire antipathy. What

Then can be the cause of their constant attendance there? Custom, I presume, is one cause; a custom contracted before they were capable of being accountable for their conduct. They were early initiated by those who were over them; and, therefore, like a tramelled animal, they have gone in that way ever since. Another, and, perhaps, with many, a greater reason is, a prospect of appearing to advantage. It affords an excellent opportunity of exposing their persons to the view of the public, when expence, labour, and art, in respect of apparel, have contributed all that they can, to make them appear with the most agreeable grace. To purchase, and to prepare these for the sabbath-day, exhausts their stock of money and time; and to adjust them in the most fashionable and flattering form, is a laborious Sunday morning service. And then to the place of appearance they go; to see and be seen; to give and receive salutations, and to say their prayers; but to whom, and for what, their ignorance suffers them not to be sensible. This gratifies the pride of some, who, it seems, seek only to excel in point of appearance. Others have deeper views; they want, it is probable, to dispose of themselves, and so come to this mart

mart for a match; to get a husband or a wife, being the principal reason why they are seen there. Some find their interest in transacting outward affairs, either at, or in the way to, or from the place of public worship, and so serve both their bodies and souls. Others go to see a friend; some to spend an idle hour; and many for they know not what. In a word, those places which better days set apart for the service of the Lord, and to promote the salvation of souls, are now prostituted principally to evil purposes. Seeing then that the conduct of many who frequent there, carries in it the clearest evidence of a complete contrariety to, and perfect inconsistency with, religion, or even the desire of it; it is evident, that this may be, without a preparation for doing good.

Neither does a *penitent and reformed condition* imply a preparation for doing good; inasmuch as it may be without either the favour or the image of God. It is nevertheless true, that real penitency is the effect of grace; flows either from the remains or the beginning of a right principle. Where the soul has retained so much light and life as to be capable of knowing and condemning evil, that may be the principle of penitency; or, where it is entirely dark and dead, and so can neither see nor censure sin, the grace of God's spirit by enlightening and inlivening it, produceth a principle of true repentance. Nor is any thing, save the one or the other of these, sufficient; as, without it, the soul can neither see, nor hate, nor forsake sin, as a thing displeasing to God and damnable to man. Some sins indeed become so prejudicial to the body or temporal estate as to make some forsake them, without that grace. An instance of which, a few years ago, was in a man excessively subject to drunkenness; who, through his incapacity, in one of

of his intoxicated times, lost the principal part of his temporal property; which, when he became sober, and sensible of, so affected him, that he resolved never to taste strong drink any more. A resolution which he ever after maintained. But that it was not his conscience which caused his reformation, is evident from his continuing in other sins. And others, to repair a decayed constitution, a broken fortune, or to retrieve a lost character, &c. have forsaken particular sins, but continued in others. Now this partial reformation was so far from denominating them true penitents, that if they had forsaken all their sins for the same or similar reasons, it would have signified nothing in respect of their souls, it being a mere matter of temporal convenience, and not the Lord's honour, nor their own salvation, which induced them to it; and other reasons, in that case, weigh nothing with the Most High, nor ministers good to the mind.

Yea, where sin is forsaken as offensive to God and hurtful to men; yet while it remains unforgiven, the person is neither accepted of God, nor the inward principle purified; consequently there is not a qualification for doing good. This is as evident as that a Christian principle, consisting of the love and likeness of the Lord, is the only and indispensably necessary cause of a Christian practice. Neither then does the deepest repentance, accompanied with the fullest reformation, constitute a Christian or qualify to do good.

Yea, some degree of *Faith* may be, without Christianity. The believing that there is one God, is not only the faith of all nations, but, generally, of the individuals of every nation. Nor, in the case of any who have a capacity to judge of the nature of things, and to draw rational conclusions from

from them, is any thing, save the objects of sense, necessary to form this sort of faith; inasmuch as the works of creation and providence carry in them an incontestable evidence of the being and attributes of a God, who is wise, great, and good.—Faith too in the person and performances of the Lord Jesus Christ, is attainable in the same way. The scripture, which contains the only revelation of him, so far as it is understood, assists, objectively, in believing in him; and which, as an historical truth, may be believed by the power of the rational faculty, without either the aid of a divine disposition or being supernaturally assisted.—Faith likewise in the Holy Ghost, is compatible with this condition; and not only as he is the third person in the Trinity, but also as the agent of all the transactions betwixt the Saviour and the souls of men; in particular, as the revealer of all sacred truth in the scriptures, and as giving the sense of it to the soul by changing its disposition, and thereby capacitating it to comprehend it; as, also, by immediate revelations, either in opening the scripture or by suggesting new matter to the mind, touching spiritual or temporal things.

Yea, faith, as it refers to, and is the condition of salvation, may be without Christianity. The promises of God, which are outward sensible signs of inward saving benefits, may be as firmly believed as any other part of the bible by the rational soul, separate from, or independent of, divine assistance: For, reason, which herein is the root of faith, requires only revealed truth as a foundation to raise a structure of faith upon. Whoever then believes the scripture, in general, may believe, in particular, *That if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And as this may
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be believed upon the ground of a rational truth, by the single assistance of the rational faculty, so, more especially, when the mind is a little illuminated and enlivened: For when the soul is made sensible of its state as sinful, and exposed to the wrath of God, and trembles for fear of future infelicity; it may, notwithstanding, believe, that Jesus is the Saviour, and, in consequence, that the promise of God, for his sake, will be fulfilled upon it. And yet, while it is so circumstanced, it is not in a condition which denominates it a Christian. Hence, in all these instances, faith may be without pardon and purity, the knowledge of salvation and an earnest of heaven; and, therefore, without a qualification for doing good.

How evident then is it, that men may be born in a Christian country, be baptized, confirmed, receive the sacrament, feed the poor, pray in a customary way, attend public worship, be penitent and reform, have faith, and yet not be Christians, nor qualified to do good.

And having shewn how far a man may go and not be a Christian, I shall now briefly point out how he may become one. If then you would be a Christian, do good, and be rewarded in heaven; know, that all the foregoing things, and whatever else of your own can be added to them, are such as no dependence can be placed on; that neither their nature nor number can save. Of this you may be confident by the condition you are in; that being a proof of what they have or have not done. Can you then with assurance say, that you are so accepted of God as to be in his favour, and that your soul is so holy as to have a continual tendency to glorify him, and to do good to mankind? What evidence have you of these? Is his love shed abroad in your heart, in peace and in joy, by a deliverance

liverance from condemnation? Can you cry, Abba, Father, from a conviction of being adopted into the family of God, by having his spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Have you an earnest of heaven in your heart, by a preparation for it, in holy tempers and affections? And do you, in consequence of these things, desire to die, as being assured that your soul will be received into the celestial world? Now if you cannot say it is so, be sure that it is not, and that you are not in a state of salvation; these, the knowledge of them, and salvation being the same, or inseparable things.

Be not surprized at this; do not think that Christianity is either contrary to, or short of, Christ fully formed in the heart, the hope of heaven. The reason of which ariseth from the nature of the things with which it has to do. Now the things with which it is principally concerned, are the Almighty, his service, and kingdom. But these are holy in the greatest degree; the Lord's moral attributes are goodness, justice, and truth; his law is holy, just, and good; and his kingdom requires these properties in all its possessors. Hence, it necessarily follows, that whatever constitutes the Lord, his law, and kingdom, must enter into the composition of all that are agreeable to him, qualified to serve him, and prepared to possess the kingdom prepared by him.

To confirm these assertions, I shall cite some scriptures which speak the same language: *Be ye holy, saith the Lord, for I am holy. As he is, so are we in this world. And that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. That by these ye might be made partakers of the divine nature. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* These are highly

highly expressive of man's moral likeness to the Lord.—And how he is to be served, is signified by, *Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thy self. That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.*—And that which prepares for his kingdom, is to be understood by the following pertinent passages: *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

Nor is it possible that these should subsist in the soul, without a sense of them. The soul is the seat of sense, and when impressed by outward objects, it receives sensible ideas of them. In like manner, spiritual impressions, whether producing sorrow, or joy, &c. are exceeding sensible. In particular, it knows the state it is in in respect of salvation, of its capacity to conform to the commandments of God, and of its qualification for his kingdom. That

These are self-evident things; many passages of scripture clearly prove. A specimen of which, are the following: *And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And hereby we know that he abideth in us; by the spirit which he hath given us.*—These carry in them an incontestable evidence, that salvation is sensible to the soul.—And the ability to perform the good pleasure of God, is also an apparent principle, implanted in the mind, by which it is set to serve him. This implies a light to comprehend, a will to choose, and strength to act accordingly. Agreeable to which,

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it is said, *I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.* For we are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. And that the evidence of an earnest of heaven agrees not only with man's earthly condition, but is also inseparable from a preparation for it, is evident; to which the following, and other scriptures, bear the clearest testimony: *For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the spirit. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Now what can be more evident than that that which constitutes a Christian, qualifies to serve God, and prepares for heaven, is not only the heart so renewed as to resemble the Deity in a divine disposition, with a propensity and power to please him, and a meetness in the properties of it to associate with the Saints above, but that there is also an evidence of each necessarily arising from it: Such know that they are of God by the spirit which he hath given them; they sensibly perceive that their hearts are set to serve him, and they anticipate the happiness of heaven by a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

And inasmuch as these are the natural and necessary ingredients which enter into the composition of the Christian principle; where they are not, the contrary are; the absence of the Lord's love, likeness, and an earnest of heaven, suppose his wrath, Satan's image, and an earnest of hell. The one or the other of these must be. All the difference is,
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that some sinners know their state, and others do not. Some feel the wrath of God abide upon them in present condemnation, and have fearful fore-bodings of future damnation. Others are insensible of all that concerns them; they cannot tell whether they be children of God or of the devil, heirs of heaven or of hell; they are asleep in sin, and secure in danger. This is their general character. The only exceptions to be made to it are, that they have short intervals of slight conviction; that while the day of grace endures, the divine spirit strives with, convinces and condemns them. But that these convictions, with many, never come to good effect, is evident from their continuing to commit sin; they cease not from swearing, lying, sabbath-breaking, &c. Hence it is, that the world lieth in wickedness; sin overspreads the land as a flood; all orders of men, few exceptions to be made, are deeply infected with it.

However, as a preparation for doing good, is absolutely necessary; it is a point to which we cannot be too attentive, and for the attaining of which, if less would not suffice, it were highly profitable for a man to sacrifice all his sensual satisfactions, abandon his profitable pursuits, emaciate his body, and afflict his soul to the highest degree; for what can it profit him to have a continued succession of sensual enjoyments, to acquire riches, to be plump in person, and easy in spirit, when he is the slave of sin, the devil's servant, and an heir of damnation! A condition so calamitous, if rightly understood, would be sufficient to excite against himself the severest indignation, and provoke him to pursue, with unremitted ardour, this most excellent antidote against evil, and power to do good. For the unfolding of which, I shall briefly offer the following particulars:

Now that which this is grounded upon, is man's condition as a sinner. The properties of which, are blindness, hardness, fearlessness, and want of a well-grounded hope. The sinner is insensible of himself, his sin, danger, and the way of salvation. He knows not that his heart is hellish, the very image of the devil, and a source of sinful and damnable deeds. He sees not that his life is a transcript of the devil's law; that he literally does what the Lord forbids, and what the devil would have him to do. He is likewise dark in regard of danger, not knowing that he is already condemned to be damned, and that the sentence may soon be executed upon him. And he is equally insensible of the way of being saved from sin and suffering.—Hence he is hard; he does not lament his case, his heart is not softened by sorrow for sin, nor is his head waters, nor his eyes fountains of tears. And as his sin increases, so does his hardness. And when it has got to the highest pitch, his heart is as immovable as the millstone, and as senseless as flesh seared with a hot iron. And from this callous condition, the unmeaning mad mirth of wicked men proceeds. Instead of weeping and wailing, for the intolerable and eternal torments they are subject unto; they laugh, sport, play, jest, joke, dance, sing songs, &c. Now none but fools and madmen can do so when in danger of death and damnation.—Inseparable from which, is their being void of the fear of God, of death, and of damnation. God, notwithstanding his greatness and goodness, justice and holiness, omnipresence and omniscience, does not affect them; his fear is neither in their heart nor before their eyes. The reason of which is, he is not an adequate object, they have not senses capable of rightly conceiving of him. He is invisible and holy, and
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can only be seen by a sight which their dark minds are destitute of: For a sinful disposition is to the soul, what blindness is to the body: they both render insensible of their respective objects. Hence, as the blind see no danger on the brink of a pit; so senseless sinners see not the evil of sin, the wrath of God, the curse of the law, nor the damnation of hell. To all these, though revealed from heaven against them, they are as blind as a beetle: Therefore they are as bold as lions, live securely, dare to die, yea to take a leap in the dark, not knowing whither they are going.

Now if the lives of men be a proof of the state of their inward principle, this condition is exceeding common, as many not only live in a customary course of sinning, but, also, with all the signs of satisfaction in so doing: which evidence the evil of their heart, and the habits they have contracted; shew the callousness of their consciences, and want of concern for salvation.

How then may these be delivered from their dark, dead, and dangerous condition? Supernatural assistance is absolutely necessary, inasmuch as they cannot enlighten and enliven themselves. These are properties which human culture, without the concurrence of divine grace, cannot principle a soul with. But when the glorious sun of righteousness begins to arise upon a benighted soul, he infuseth light and life into it, whereby it awaketh out of sleep and ariseth from the dead; and, as a necessary consequence, seeth, feeleth, and apprehendeth in a way widely different from what it did. Sins, which long lay in oblivion, now begin to appear; for he who giveth it a capacity to comprehend, is also its remembrancer, by reminding it of its many misdeeds. Hence, they pour in so plentifully upon it, that it soon sinks under a sense

of them, and cries, God be merciful to me a sinner!

Now this is done with or without means. With; for he attacheth himself to, and worketh by many. Whatever occurs that is calculated to give man a suitable sense of his condition, and excite him to seek deliverance from it, he applieth, and giveth energy to. Without; through immediate manifestations to the mind, by voice, vision, dreams, representations, impulses, infusions of light, life, power, &c. which produce conviction, guilt, sorrow, shame, fear, hatred of evil, desire of good, and other suitable sensations; which prepare the soul for what is prepared for it.

Nor is there any difficulty in this. God, who cannot be insensible of any thing that concerns a sinner, can make him remember whatever he has done; he who will judge the world in future, according to its works, can easily point out in the present time, past public and private transactions. He can do it by degrees or by a full conviction at first. It is generally done gradually, because it is his will that the sinner should concur in his own concerns; that he should be upon his trial in seeking as well as in serving him. The condition of many carries in it a clear conviction of this, inasmuch as they are neither fully convinced nor converted. And yet all might be, while the day of grace endures. But by disobedience, conviction with most is superficial and short lived, enters not deep and soon dies.—Nor does the Lord compel them to forsake their sins, as their continuing in them sufficiently proves. And yet he would, if he consistently could; inasmuch as he has no pleasure in their sin, nor in their suffering for it. The ignorance, impenitency, and wickedness then which abound in the world, are not the fruit of any

any defect in the grace of God's spirit, nor of his want of good-will towards them, but of the careless, slothful, timorous conduct of men. Hence, it necessarily follows, that a preparation for doing good, is produced proportionably as the cause of it is concurred with, by those upon whom it is made.

Now this ariseth from the nature of man and the covenant of grace. The nature of man is free and active; and, therefore, capable of making opposition, especially when it is sinful. Its choosing or refusing, is the effect of its freedom, notwithstanding motives from many things to the one or the other. Hence, under the load of influence, it is arbitrary, acts as its possessor pleases, particularly in the last point of determination; and so may either obey or disobey the dictates of the divine spirit and its own (then) divided disposition and desire—Nor is this contrary to, but rather consonant with, the nature of divine commands. For when the Almighty requires men to repent, and tells them that they shall perish, if they do not; it supposes, that they may or may not, and that it depends on their own pleasure to do or leave it undone. In like manner, as conviction is but seldom complete on its first commencing; the increase of it depends on obedience to the beginning of it. And forasmuch as the beginning is small, it is absolutely necessary to be attentive to it. It is like a spark thrown on combustibles, the greenness or moistness of which, tends rather to quench it than to be kindled by it. The heart which is sinful in itself, and surrounded by temptations, requires all the culture man is capable of giving it. Thoughts, desires, and whatever else that flow from the seed of grace sown in it, must be watched over and reduced to practice as far as is possible, and the contrary

trary things restrained and kept under, that they prevent not the prevailing of the good principle. And as this method is taken, there will be an increase of discernment, desire, detestation of sin, &c. which, by how much they increase, will destroy the false peace, quicken the conscience, raise fear, convulse the soul, and create an unspeakable concern. The soul will then be seen in its true colours; a sinful, guilty, hell-deserving, helpless thing. Hence, the sinner, sinking in his own eyes, will be cut off from all hope resulting from his own righteousness, repentance, reformation, prayers, tears, &c. All his supports will sink under him; he will have no plea, but—I have sinned, I am condemned, I deserve to be damned; what must I do to be saved!

And now sinners, is it necessary to intreat you to be forgiven? Surely, if the Lord will forgive, that need not be. Rather, you should be as willing as a malefactor is to accept the King's mercy. Consider then your need of it, and conclude, that if he will vouchsafe so great a favour, it is your highest wisdom to accept it, however hard his conditions may be. And, be assured, that nothing is more agreeable to him, it being for that very purpose that you have been permitted to live. Your sins, with your unholy soul, have been sufficient to separate you from himself, and to sink you into endless sufferings: Therefore your being out of hell indicates how little pleasure he has had in your punishment.

Consider, likewise, what he has done to do you good; to prevent your perdition, and to prosper your soul. He gave his son to be a sacrifice for your sins, accepting his sufferings as a sufficient atonement for them: for he *was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses.*

passes. This then is the ground on which you must go to find forgiveness. And it is a ground sufficient to sustain all the weight of your sins. It is firm footing, though all be sea besides. It is infinite in value, being the sacrifice of him who was God and man. It was also accepted of the Father, whereof he gave assurance by raising him from the dead; *for he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.*

And for your farther encouragement, be attentive to his promise; for, without that, you can have but little hope of success. However, if the word of a God, of one who cannot lie, and who is able, willing, and ready to fulfil it, can encourage, you may have it from this quarter, inasmuch as they are all yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus; centering in him as the mediator of the new covenant, and sure to be fulfilled for his sake, being faithful who has promised. A specimen of the promises contained in this covenant is, *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* These are plain and pertinent passages; general in sense, as having respect to all sinners, and particularly applicable to every penitent. Hereby then the mind of the Most High is made known concerning mankind. This is the portion he has provided and promised through his Son Jesus Christ, the mediator betwixt himself and them. Nor is it defective in quality or quantity; its quality is according to their condition as
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guilty unholy creatures, and its quantity is equal to all their evils.

Now what can prevent your partaking of this? Nothing but your own incredulity or carelessness. If you believe the report, credit what the Lord hath said, and confide in him for its fulfilling; and if you earnestly seek it by prayer, and in the use of all other appointed means, it will be given. This is as sure as that God is true; for he is faithful and just to forgive, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. Here then rest your soul; go not from this hold; agonize to enter in, and the promise will take place, and your soul shall be sensible of it. Of which, salvation shall be one, and satisfaction another sign, of its being received. You shall be so saved as to have neither guilt for what is past, nor fear for what is to come; peace and hope shall possess and preserve you, and purity and power shall be the properties of your inward principle, for your affections will be suitable to their excellent objects, the Lord and his service, and their strength will make you surmount difficulties, escape dangers, resist temptations, and discharge duties: With these you shall be proof against all opposers, and equal to every task assigned.—They will likewise afford solid satisfaction; none of the evils which characterized your former life, shall condemn you; rather, your once guilty conscience will be silent and serene, menace no more for what was amiss, but acquit and console you; which will afford an excellent evidence of your acceptance with God. Holiness of heart too, or divine tempers and affections will be a source of satisfaction, both in respect of their essence and action; their essence will be high and heavenly, partaking of the properties of the high and holy Lord, and their actings will correspond with

with his righteous commands. And the hope resulting from both, will heighten the happiness by the idea of the continuance and increase of its cause, both here and hereafter.

And now being created anew in Christ Jesus, what return will you make to the Lord for his benefits? That which he requireth is, That you do good. The objects of which are himself and mankind. And inasmuch as he is the greatest and best of beings, as well as the author of all mercies and blessings, and object of expectation; duty must first be done to him. In the discharge of which, both your heart, lips, and life must be employed. And, first, your part must be performed in his *praise*. In which, his excellences and acts; his spirituality and purity, wisdom, goodness, greatness, justice, mercy, patience, long-suffering, &c. must be the objects of your adoration. Praise to the high and holy Lord, is an eminent act of the rational and holy soul; and these are the sublime subjects on which to expatiate in that celestial service. Which being a principal part of the employ of happy souls in heaven; it is an imitation of those celestial songsters in that which is their greatest excellence, and the most sublime part of their service. Nor is this imitation incompatible with man's condition, inasmuch as the service and the power to perform it, are the same both above and below. Hence, in doing good, God must be adored in a mental and in a modulated way, with the mind and with the mouth. The mind must have a high and honourable sense of him, and significant signs of what he is and has done, must be exhibited by sayings and songs of praise.—The life likewise must shew forth his praise. Every action must correspond with the nature and extent of his commands; flow from the fruits of his spirit in the heart, and be done with
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design to honour his name, nature, and government in the world.

Gratitude also for benefits, is another way of doing good, as it has respect unto God. Benefits are the great and good things daily received. Temporal blessings, the necessities and conveniences of life, are a portion dispensed in the way of divine providence; and being imparted for the preservation, prosperity, and pleasure of man's perishable part; it is a duty incumbent upon him to be unfeignedly thankful for them. He that can sit down to a table prepared by providence, and return from it without a grateful sense of his benefactors bounty, is a brute; and, therefore, by a sensible satirist, is compared to a swine under an oak; which, though it feed to the full on what is fallen from it, never looks up to see whence the fruit came. Such are insensible of their dependence on God; who, by restraining the rain can reduce them to the greatest extremity. Besides, supposing no danger of that; thankfulness is every dependent creature's duty; and the want of it, in ancient days, was a mark of an abandoned mind; for when St. Paul gives a catalogue of the greatest crimes, and thereby describes the cause of some being cast off and accursed of God, he concludes it with, *neither were thankful*. Surely then none discharges his duty to God, who is not grateful for daily benefits. A confirmation of which may be collected from instances of the contrary kind, in the example of the most excellent: Our divine Redemer and pattern, before he fed the five thousand, *Took bread, and gave thanks unto God*. St. Paul, likewise, *Took bread, and gave thanks unto God, in the midst of them all, and when he had broken it, he began to eat*. This method of proceeding, shews the sense they had of the sovereign being, and the obligation they were under, to be grateful to him

him for ~~the~~ temporal things. Nor must the gratitude of man be confined to these. Spiritual ones, which, as they are more profitable, pleasant, and durable, are a much greater cause of it. Betwixt them, there is no comparison; inasmuch as the best, and the greatest abundance of earthly things, answer no better purpose than to support the body and satisfy the sensual appetite, for a short and uncertain season. But spiritual ones, have respect to the present and future well-being of the immortal soul. And that they have as real a substance, and are as sensible to the soul as temporal ones are to the body, is intimated and evidenced by Christ's calling himself the *bread and the water of life*. Which, though figurative expressions, yet are significant of substantial and spiritually sensible things. These denote the graces of the spirit, which enlighten, enliven, strengthen, comfort, &c. the souls of men; they make them alive to God; constitute them capable of loving, delighting, rejoicing, and hoping in him; form the essence of heaven in the heart in holiness and happiness; and are, in the present time, an anticipation of eternal glory. To which inward principle, (for all these belong to that) is added such blessings as serve to refresh, invigorate, and make more fruitful in that which is agreeable to God, profitable and pleasant to themselves, and edifying to others. Deliverances likewise, both of a temporal and spiritual nature, as wrought by the providence and grace of God, and a well grounded hope of heaven, enhance the whole. These are the general benefits for which man is to be grateful; and, thereby, to do good.

A third method of doing good, in regard of God, is to *keep his commandments*. This has respect to every particular of the whole of man's life, whether sacred or civil; agreeable to that com-

mand, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* To glorify him, is to have a continual remembrance of him, to advert to his presence, to act under his eye as the inspector of all designs and deeds, and to consider him as the object, end, judge, and rewarder of them. To glorify him, is, also, to imitate him in all his imitable properties and perfections; in his wisdom, holiness, love, goodness, truth, justice, mercy, patience, long-suffering, &c. in the highest degree we are capable of. To glorify him, is, likewise, to do all things with a design to please him, and to shew forth his praise, by making his name, nature, attributes, and acts honourable in the eyes of others, that they also may be excited to seek his salvation and serve him.

Doing good has also respect to *men*; to their souls and bodies. And as the soul is the principal part; the good which is done to it, is of great and eternal concernment, as tending to prevent its perdition, and to promote its salvation. And that the instrumentality of man may be of exceeding great service, is evident. St. James saith, *Let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* And yet herein he can be but an instrument. However, as the Lord has constituted man capable of receiving spiritual good by second causes, and commands men to contribute to it according to their power; it is a duty incumbent upon them so to do. To which purpose, the example must be excellent, as nothing is more instructive than that; for a good man seen, though silent, counsel gives; and the toucht spectator wishes to be wise, to be like him. This is a powerful way of instructing, inasmuch as works are more forcible than words. Words are easy and cheap, and often the effect of pride

pride or a worse principle; as many are ambitious of being teachers, for applause or profit. But works, though not always unfeigned; yet generally indicate what a man is, it being difficult to act the christian, in all points of practice, without a right principle. To do good then, in this way, is to act agreeable to the gospel. And this thread must run through the whole life, and be so regular as to have no unevenness in it; for a defect in piety to God, in justice, truth, charity, &c. to men, will be like a dead fly in the apothecaries ointment.

But doing good, as it respects the soul, may be ministered by words also. Sinners must be reprov-
ed, or their blood, if they perish, will be required at the neglectors hands. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; Thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* Now to suffer sin, is to permit it to pass unreprieved, when it is possible to be done; and which, according to the judgment of God, is to hate our brother. The reason of which is, that sin is the direct, the sure way to endless sufferings. Who then that loves another, would not seek to prevent or pluck him from the way of perdition? Surely if one for whom we had a favour, were pursuing paths leading to the destruction of his person or property, we should reprove and apprise him of his danger; and not to do it, would argue the want of a good will, and indicate an evil one. Who then that loves souls can see them descend to the devil and damnation without reproving them? Surely none. What then are they in whose mouths are no reproofs, but suffer sinners to go to hell as fast as sin and the wings of time can carry them? Alas, they have no love, or they would labour for their good. Then they are haters of them; that is their proper character. And, it is probable, in the day of judgment, sinners will accuse them of

their cruel silence, by saying, If you had reprov'd us for swearing, lying, drunkenness, whoredoms, sabbath-breaking, &c. we might have been saved from sin and suffering.—Good may likewise be done by instruction; for as every man must be warned, so must every man be taught. Such as know not their state of mind must have it explained to them; in particular, the evil nature and damnable effects of sin should be shewn in their true colours, that they may be without excuse. The devilish state of the heart too, its pride, anger, self-will, covetousness, and other wicked tempers and affections must be discovered as inconsistent with christianity, and incompatible with heaven. From these must be inferred the absolute necessity of forgiveness and the grace of God's spirit to restore them to his favour and image; without which it is impossible to be at peace with him, to serve him, or to be saved with an everlasting salvation. The way to obtain, retain, and improve them to the best purpose must also be pointed out, viz. by repentance, faith, and obedience. In a word, example, reproof, instruction, &c. must be used to prevent the destruction, and to promote the salvation of men.

Doing good has likewise respect to the bodies of men; and implies ministering to them, by counsel, caution, gifts, &c. advising them for their advantage, guarding them against evil, and furnishing them with such things as they want and we have to give. In particular, feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, relieving the distressed, visiting the sick, &c.

Let us now observe what it is to do evil. To do evil, in a good state of mind, is to act contrary to its dictates and divine commands. This is the effect of that freedom consequent on a constitution of mind which qualifies man to act a part for which he

he is accountable to God. But the corruption contracted by sinning, destroys that freedom, by rendering it impossible to choose and to do good, and by fixing it in the choice and practice of evil. That it is thus, is evident from this, that freedom of choice is not compatible with every condition; that though a holy soul has a liberty to choose evil, an unholy one has not a power to choose good; they cannot turn and prepare themselves to good works, without the grace of God assisting them. Hence then though sin begin with freedom of soul, it may issue in bondage to it. And a constant course of sinning, is an evident proof of a compleatly corrupt state: For sin, in the beginning, by producing guilt, fear, shame, &c. sits uneasy on the soul; and so is neither so frequent, forcible, natural, nor agreeable as when the heart is corrupted and the conscience quieted by it. That constant course of wickedness then, and the lightness, laughter, mirth, and apparent unconcern which accompany it, and which are so common in the world, are clear indications that many are so corrupt as to be unconscious of their condition: they are neither condemned in their consciences, nor do they dread damnation for what they do.

Seeing then that the first cause of sinning is a wrong use of free-agency, the second is a corrupt heart consequent on it. And to do evil, is to be guilty of acts of ungodliness or unrighteousness, of a breach of any command contained in the first or the second table of the law; of loving and serving any thing more than the Lord, bowing down to or worshipping idols, taking the Lord's name in vain, breaking sabbaths, not honouring parents, killing, committing adultery, stealing, bearing false witness against neighbours, or coveting what is another's. To do evil, is, likewise, to do any, and

consequently every thing, out of God's favour and image; (for these are absolutely necessary as a preparation for doing good) Hence, whatever is done without these, is sinful: as such, not only cursing, swearing, lying, whoredom, drunkenness, picking, stealing, cheating, defrauding, covetousness, pride, passion, self-will, &c. are sinful; but, all their civil and sacred actions; their plowing, sowing, reaping, gathering into barns, buying, selling, trading, trafficking, prayers, praises, offerings, alms, reading, hearing, receiving sacraments, &c. are so also. All these, however good in themselves, are evil in those who do them without the qualifications requisite to render them good in the account of God: For, as an evil tree cannot bear good fruit, so an evil person cannot do good things.—Moreover, to do evil, signifies also to be propagators of it, by doctrines dishonourable to God, or detrimental to men; by denying the Deity, or all or any of his essential attributes, his providence, his appointment to judge and reward men according to their works, the service due to him, &c. by rejecting the scriptures, by wrong representations of the nature and way of salvation, by foolish and false ways of worship, and by every other thing whereby the Lord is robbed of his right, and men are prejudiced in their spiritual and eternal concerns. In particular, to teach as the way to heaven that which is the way to hell; whereby souls are kept insensible of sin and danger, and unacquainted with the nature, necessity, and way of salvation. This, as it will have effects subsisting for ever in the loss of heaven and the gaining of hell, is the most dreadful way of doing evil; it is being factors for the devil, destroying souls, and peopling the regions of damnation.—Example also is a way whereby evil is done. So the swearer, sabbath-breaker,

breaker, drunkard, liar, railer, abuser of mankind by words or works, the covetous, the worldly talker, the proud, the passionate, the song-singer, &c. shew others the way to work wickedness, and by all the influence or force that facts can give, excite them to the commission of it. Thus governors instruct the governed, preachers their people, masters their servants, parents their children, and all other public offenders all with whom they have to do.—To do evil is likewise to command others to commit it, to teach it by precept, to solicit, entice, insnare, suborne, bribe or hire to it, to defraud, cheat, pick, steal, rob, maim, murder, backbite, slander, belie, &c.—Moreover, to do evil is to countenance or contribute to those diversions, fashions, and methods of proceeding which evidently tend to bias the minds of men from God and goodness, corrupt their morals, and consequently, disqualify them for serving the Lord here, and being saved hereafter.—Thus much then for doing good and evil.

Let us now attend to the consequence of these things, as signified by : *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.* The hour is coming—The awful hour is drawing near when all the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. The voice of the Son of God, it is probable, is the sound of the arch-angels trumpet, he being commissioned by Christ to awaken the world. Of this the apostle gives two pointed predictions : *Behold, saith he, I will shew you a mystery : we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and ye shall be changed.—For the Lord himself shall descend*

scend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. This will be the prologue to the grand procedure of the last day. And as our text teacheth nothing touching those who will then be alive; that circumstance is here supplied, by these pertinent passages.

A part of the apostle's mystery then is, *That we shall not all sleep*, or be in the grave at our Lord's last coming; that there will be a living as well as a dead people to be dealt with; and that though the living cannot be raised, yet will they witness a change, in substance, the same; for the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed into the same condition.

And when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, O how will the living be affected! Some (it being always night with a part of the earth) will be a sleep: others, it is probable, indulging in sensual delights: Some executing schemes for profit or pleasure: others planning for the same purpose: many committing the most diabolical deeds; murdering, robbing, picking, stealing, cheating, defrauding, swearing, lying, drinking, whoring, and every other species of evil: And all unapprized of, and unprepared for, so tremendous a transaction! Like the antideluvians, secure in bad circumstances; eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the flood came upon them. Or, as the lawless sons of Sodom and Gomorrha; mad with lust, pride, and passion, when fire and brimstone fell upon them. But, lo! in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye the alarm is given; like loud thunder bursting over their heads, the trumpets sounds rends the air, and fills the whole concave of heaven, crying, *For judgment, judgment, O ye sons and daughters of men, prepare!*

Now

Now the sleepers start from their couches in great consternation, midnight revels brake up, business ceases, diversions are forsaken, the great, the gay, the wise, the wanton, the lofty dame, and the blooming maid, are all suddenly surprized, convulsed, and confounded; hearing the voice of God, they start, fear, tremble, and turn pale; and to increase their consternation, the judge appears in flaming fire, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. And now those sensual, unrighteous, and ungodly wretches, whom neither God nor man could dissuade from their sins, or to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world; are at their wits end, know not how to escape, see no open door, and therefore run to the rocks and mountains; "for the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who is able to stand." Thus will the sinners in Zion be afraid; and fearfulness will surprize the hypocrites.—Now, likewise, he will call to the dead; for all that are in their graves shall hear his voice. A voice incomparably loud. Sinai's shrill trumpet and loud thunders were silence compared with this. It will enter the earth, pierce to the bottom of the sea, run to the utmost bounds of the world, and cry in the ears of all, *Awake, arise ye dead, and come to judgment!* To this powerful word, the dust of all the dead will be attentive. He, who in the beginning, called the elements out of nothing, and all the hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, out of them; can
re-create,

re-create, can cause all the dead to hear. They who turned a deaf ear to every other call, shall hear this. The dust of the faint and the sinner shall be alike attentive. They will shake of their slumber, awake, and from their silent bed of dust wherein they have slept many a century, will lift up their innocent or their guilty heads: They will hear the voice of the great God; and hearing will live.—Their spirits too will hear; Spirits in paradise will hear, and hold themselves in readiness to re-enter their old habitation, and the howlers in hell shall hear, and be apprized of there approaching fate. Thus this mighty, this tremendous voice, shall be heard in earth, heaven, and hell.

And shall come forth. Now all the world will obey; all the dust of the rational world, of men and women, shall be obedient to this call; none shall stay behind; every atom that entered into their composition shall answer: All the animal earth will be in motion, there will be a shaking among the dry bones. Tombs will burst, graves open, scattered dust unite, the sea give up her dead, severed parts assemble, yea, each vagrant mote, whether in earth, or air, or ocean shall come forth. “Now monuments prove faithful to their trust, and render back their long committed dust. Now charnels rattle; scattered limbs, and all the various bones advance; fragments of bodies in confusion fly, to distant regions to claim deserted members, and compleat the frame.” All the parts and particles necessary to compose immortal bodies; the Lord who is infinite in wisdom and power, will distinguish, collect, and compact together.

But how different from their originals! The natural, corrupt, and mortal body, will be spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal. All its present properties will be so altered, that though the ground
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or substance of it be the same, it will differ from its first estate as darkness does from light. The pattern of its purity, permanency, and other glorious properties, will be the glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ: As he is, so will they be; *for he will change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.* It will be raised, it is probable, to the highest pitch of purity, matter is capable of; but it will not be so spiritual and intelligent as the mind. However, it will have senses and appetites suitable to its situation; to the objects that surround it, and to the satisfactions assigned for it: It will be a new body naturalized to a new world. Moreover, it will be honourable and active; honourable, in consequence of its likeness to, and admittance into the presence of the Lord; and active, as the effect of its near resemblance to spirit; *It is sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; in weakness, but raised in power.* In a word, it will be luminous, lively, strong, active, and immortal; capable of beholding the glory of God, enjoying the happiness of heaven, and assisting the soul in all its services.

Nor will the bodies of the wicked remain in their present imperfect condition. They will have the same properties of spirituality, incorruptibility, and immortality, as the righteous. In consequence of which, their capacities will be enlarged to render them capable of greater misery. Their spirituality will make their sensations more sensible, and thereby more distressing. Their incorruptibility will preserve the exquisiteness of their torments. And their immortality continue them for ever. They will likewise have senses and appetites agreeable to their condition; adapted to damnation, to their place and portion. Their hue also will agree with hell; they will be as dark as midnight, and their
honour

honour shall be taken away ; for *they shall be raised to shame and everlasting contempt.*

And now the body being formed anew ; the soul which has long been absent from it, with desire or reluctance returns ; re-enters, and takes up its eternal abode in this immortal mansion. Here is her palace or prison for ever.—The righteous, whose happiness is incomplete, compared with what the resurrection will raise them unto, rejoice to resume their celestial habitation ; a habitation principled with properties which qualify it to enjoy a kingdom *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* Union with a body so principled and privileged, will be exceeding desirable. Besides, the body is the soul's second-self ; its partner on earth in all its sorrows and sufferings, enjoyments and services. And though by death the union was dissolved, and the body reduced to dust ; yet doth the soul remember their antient alliance, combination, conflicts, and comforts. Nor can it, separate from the body, enjoy the crown consequent on doing good, inasmuch as it was its instrument of action in all that it did. Hence, friendship, profit and pleasure conspire to render a re-union ardently desirable to the soul.—But, alas ! how doleful will that day be to the damned ! Instead of their bodies being improved to purposes more profitable and pleasant ; they will be fitted to render their torments more intense. The soul then being sensible for what the body is raised ; of its being to give an account of the abuse it made of its senses, appetites, and other parts, and of being dealt with accordingly, it dreads a re-union. How natural for it to say, O my instrument of unrighteousness, once I had pleasure in thee ; all thy senses ministered to my satisfaction : Thine eyes, ears, taste, touch, smell, brought fuel to my fire, by their sensual and sinful

ful objects. But, alas! If I now enter, it will not be for pleasure but pain; I must suffer for my former satisfactions. All that I shall see, hear, &c. through thee, will torment me. Through thine eyes I shall not behold beauteous sights, but doleful shades and damned spectres. Thine ears will not entertain me with pleasant sounds, but with the raving of wretches in utter ruin. Thy touch will not convey the smooth and soft sensations; rather, the frigid and the fiery. Thy taste will not pleasure me with the sweet and delicious, but with the bitter pains of repentance and burnings. Thy smell will afford no scent but the sulphurous and suffocating. In like manner it may reflect on the wretched abuse of all the other parts of the body. The hands, head, tongue, feet, &c. having obeyed its brutish, proud, passionate, self-willed, worldly desires, it will start at the thought of being tormented with them. But all delays apart, they must enter; for as they sinned, they must suffer together.

And now the dead being raised, he will prepare the place of judgment; a place probably in the region of the air; for, being represented as coming in the clouds, and the living caught up to meet him there, that may be the appointed place. The heavens passing away with a great noise, will probably be a prelude to, and a preparation for it. Thus the Almighty may "smooth the unbounded space, and spread an area for all human race."

Hence, the place being prepared, Jesus the Judge will appear. He who once came to save man, now comes to judge him. And being God and man, he is principled with the properties of both; and, therefore, more proper to perform that high office, than if he were only the one or the other. His appearance likewise will correspond with the dignity of his person and office. His person (God and man) will be resplendent, shine in all the glories of the one,
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and amiableness of the other. For, *The Son of man shall come in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, and all the angels with him; and then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. Farther; The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And to this agrees the description of Daniel: *I beheld, saith he, till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.* St. John also says, *I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it; from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.* How striking these images! How grand the representation! And how august the person! This then is the Judge before whose bar all men must appear.—And now being seated on his throne, he will summon the nations of men to the place appointed for their trial; for *the Son of man, when he cometh in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory, shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to another.* And when all nations are gathered before him, *he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left.* Here they will wait their call; all anxious for their future fate.

And that his proceeding may appear to be just and right; the rule of it will be produced. *And I saw, says John, the dead small and great, stand before*

fore God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books according to their works. This representation is an allusion to the custom of human courts; where books, containing the nature of crimes and punishments annexed to them, are produced and opposed to the practices of the persons to be tried. These books, or the things signified by them, will contain the nature and circumstances of the law which the persons to be judged, lived under. In the case of those who had no revealed law, the judgment will be according to the law of their mind; a law (sooner or later) inscribed on every human heart; and which not only serves as a rule of life, but also as a principle of action, capacitating them both to know and to do the will of God. Agreeable to which, St. Paul says, *For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these not having the law, are a law unto themselves, which shews the work of the law written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*—This is the law of all men, though not the only law of all, inasmuch as some have also had revealed institutions, of a moral, ceremonial, and political kind. To this law, in the time of the patriarchs, were added various intimations of God's will to particular persons; which became traditional for the advantage of others. From the time of Moses to the coming of Christ, the Jews had a body of laws, and the precepts of the prophets. And from Christ's ministry to the end of the world, the Christians have the law of the two Testaments added to that of their mind.—Now by these laws, the respective subjects of them, will be dealt with in that day. To this purpose, the apostle says, *As*

many as have sinned without the law, meaning without the written law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel. And by how much clearer the outward revelation is, by so much is sin aggravated; consequently, they who live under the gospel are subject to greater sufferings than others, if their sins are but the same in themselves.

Then the books will be opened; the book of the law as the rule of judgment, and the book of God's remembrance, which contains the thoughts, words, and works of men. In the proceedings then of that day, Jesus Christ in his glorified humanity will act as Judge, and God to whom all things are known will bring them into judgment.—The evidences for or against every one will be, God, man's conscience, the angels, and other things. *I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the swearers, and against the adulterers, and against those that oppress, and against those that fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.* He will likewise witness for those that do well; will evidence before angels and men their degree of sincerity, zeal, activity, and sufferings in his service; benevolence, charity, sorrow, labours, &c. for the temporal, spiritual, and eternal advantage of mankind. The consciences of men will also correspond with and confirm the testimony of God; for as they acquit or accuse here, they will do the same there. Angels too, being spectators of their ways, may evidence for or against them. Devils also, may witness for those who resisted, and against such as received their temptations. Men and women may act the same part: kings and subjects, ministers and people, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and all other relations in life,
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will bear witness of the good or evil, the helps or hurts they received from each other in their temporal and spiritual concerns.

And now, all things being ready, he will open the cause, acquaint them that the time is come when they must be dealt with according to what they have done. And as the judgment will turn upon the disposition, design, and doings of men, special respect, by the judge, will be had thereunto. The disposition, in those who do good, must be divine, that being the first ground of good works. And the greater the degree of that, the more agreeable to God are the works done by it. The second ground, is the degree of design with which they were done, in respect of pleasing God and profiting mankind. And the number of good works will be a circumstance of great consideration; he will not forget any work of faith, patience of hope, or labour of love, whether for himself or for any creature of human kind.

Infants who retained their first interest in Christ; and such as sinned it away, but were afterwards accepted of God for his sake, but had not time to do good, will be saved, yet not rewarded. And other believers, whether preachers or hearers, who were capable of increasing their crown of rejoicing, but misemployed their time, opportunities, and talents, will be saved, though not without difficulty; inasmuch as they build upon (Christ) the good foundation; such doctrines or doings as are signified by *wood, hay, stubble*; things that neither tend to the honour of God, nor the good of men. However, having retained the foundation, they will be saved so as by fire; as narrowly and as nakedly as a man escapes from his house when it is on fire, but is obliged to leave all he has behind; themselves shall be saved, but their works shall be burnt. Thus:

they shall suffer the loss of that reward which a building of doctrines or doings denoted by *gold, silver, precious stones* would have intitled them to.— But they who add to their interest in Christ, by doing good, will be differently dealt with; their works, in the rewards of them, will redound to their honour and advantage in the kingdom and presence of the Lord.

The wicked will likewise be dealt with in the same way. Their diabolical disposition, doings, and the number of them, with all the circumstances of ignorance or understanding, of accident or design wherewith they were done, &c. will be the objects to which the judge will advert, and according to the nature and number of which, their condemnation and punishment will be increased or diminished, in that awful day.

In the proceedings of which, as every individual, both of the righteous and the wicked, will be brought to the bar; the time for taking cognizance of their condition, will, it may well be supposed, far exceed the limits of a natural day. And oh, what a scrutiny will pass! The secrets of all hearts will be laid open, and every rewardable or punishable work, be brought into judgment. Then will it be seen who were in Christ and who were out of him, who served God and who sinned against him. Nor will any escape; all, all must stand before the Son of man in that tremendous day! But the righteous, being already acquitted, and qualified for his kingdom, will appear with great boldness. Likewise their services and sufferings for their Lord; their sympathy with mankind, in respect of their sin and danger; their fears, cares, sorrows, and prayers for them; their reproofs, instructions, warnings, and various other methods well calculated, and earnestly intended, to be instrumental in turning them from
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the evil of their ways, will be made manifest, that every individual may see the ground and justice of the different degrees of glory soon to be conferred upon them. This procedure will prevent all suspicion of partiality in him, and all envying in them. They will see that the different degrees of their future felicity, will not be the effect of an arbitrary proceeding, but the result of their own prior practice, in that he will give to all according to what they have done. Hence, if any reflect because of inferior rewards, their reflections will fall on themselves for not making a better use of their time and talents.

And now all that have done evil shall be brought before him; all that have died without an interest in Christ, and in the guilt of their sins. God only knows how soon our first interest in him is lost, and we by sinning become the children of wrath; I say, he only knows how soon a soul deserves the damnation of hell. However, all sinners will be dealt with according to what they are and have done. If the degree of devilishness in the disposition of some make them differ from others, that may be cause of a different destination. But the principle cause of difference will be the nature and the number of their sins.—And now the foulest scene eyes ever saw, will open; for all the evils committed from the beginning to the end of time, by those who died therein, will be seen. What racks and tortures could not extort; conscience will then compel them to confess and accuse themselves of. All their designs, words, and works will be exposed to public view. Every evil scheme for profit, pleasure, and honour; all hypocritical, guileful, and fraudulent intentions; malicious, injurious, and murderous designs; envyings of others, pride of their own persons, parts, possessions, &c. hatred of goodness,
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love of evil, and pleasure in unrighteousness; lust, love of the world, anger, and envy; wilful ignorance of God, his word, and ways; want of his fear, reverence, and gratitude; contempt or mockery of him in not praying to, or in praying without understanding; ill-will, want of compassion, brotherly kindness, and charity, will be brought to light. Yea, their public evils will also be pointed out; their cursing, swearing, lying, drunkenness, whoredoms, sabbath-breaking, over-reaching, picking, stealing, robbing, covetous practices, cruelty to man or beast, murders, perjuries, atheism, idolatry, superstition, infidelity, erroneous doctrines, false ways of worship, formal services, hypocrisy, &c. with all their ranting, roaring, songs, dancings, assemblies, and whatever else they spent their time in and placed their hearts upon. In a word, all the private and public evils which they themselves committed, and contributed to make others commit, will be brought into judgment; their whole life will unfold and become conspicuous to God, angels, and men. And according to the particulars of every individual person, the judgment of God will be.

And when all the inhabitants of the earth have been audited; summoned by the Judge, brought to the bar, and acquitted or condemned, according to their condition; then will he proceed to pronounce the decisive sentence. And now every eye will be fixed upon him, and every ear open to hear his words; words that will determine their eternal condition, destine them to dwell in worlds of bliss or woe. To those on the right hand, he will first turn. And lo! what a glorious company, a multitude redeemed from among men, from every nation under heaven; a people bought and sprinkled with blood, the blood of him who was crucified on Calvary;

Calvary; and who, as the happy effect of it, are cleansed from sin and principled with an heavenly mind in a meetness for an admittance into the inheritance of the saints in light. Among which happy number, the infants in age or grace, the one of whom died before they were capable of doing good, and the other before they had time for it, and unprofitable believers, will make a part under the characters of the sons of God. The rest will have the double appellation of sons and servants; among whom will be sufferers, confessors, and martyrs.

And now he will close the last scene of sublunary things, by pronouncing on this holy and happy company the blessed and irreverfible sentence of, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* A sentence exceedingly fuitable to all that are faved, being blessed with fpiritual blessings in Chrift Jefus; with falvation from fin and mifery; with a preparation for and a profpect of heaven; and foon with an actual poffeffion and enjoyment of it. Come ye blessed! What words! How fweet! He calls them to a kingdom, where crowns and rewards will be difpenfed according to their works; works that had for their object and end the honour of God, and the good of mankind. According to the nature and number of which, they will rank in dignity and delight. Then, in the moft fuperlative fenfe, it will be well with the righteous, for the reward of their works will be given them. Happy then are they who are capable of doing good! But happier who do it! And happier ftill who do it in the higheft degree they are capable of; for their reward will be accordingly!

Then will the Judge turn to them on the left hand. A multitude, which no man can number, furpaffing the fands of the fea; all that have lived
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and died in sin ! And with what eyes of indignation will he behold them ! A look which will pierce them to the heart, and fill them with fearful forebodeings of future ruin. Not an unconcerned soul will be there, but all will be anxious for the awful event. With dire expectation they will wait to hear the sentence which will separate them from hope and happiness for ever ! A sentence highly significant of their sin and suffering ; For he will say, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ! Depart ! Go from my presence ! See my face no more for ever ! —Ye cursed !* Cursed with the curse of condemnation to everlasting fire ! *Fire !* How affecting ! It pains with the most exquisite sense and suffering.—*Everlasting !* This is the worst circumstance ; it knows no end, but will run parallel with the ages of eternity. Dreadful beyond expression !—*Prepared for the devil and his angels !* Not for men and women ; they are but intruders. Hence sinners will have satan and his angels for their associates ; one hell must hold them all. O who would be of the unhappy number ! And is this the end of doing evil ! Alas, alas ! the pain surpasseth the pleasure ; the one is but for time, and the other for eternity.

And now the sentence being passed, they will instantly utter the most hedious howl ever heard since the world began. One loud peal of expressive anguish will issue from every individual. But he who made them will shew them no mercy ; yea, he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear comes. And to compleat their ruin, what remains but that those unhappy wretches be driven to their appointed place. And lo ! like frightened sheep they flee from his presence ; the power of his words force them into the infernal regions. There they meet with the punishment proportioned to the evil they have

have done ; for each will have his own reward. Here ends all the pleasures of sin ; and here begins eternal suffering for it. No change from hence forward will pass, but one continued scene of suffering will be the portion of their cup for ever. And, O ! what remorse of conscience ! What terrible effects of the unquenchable fire ! What a gloomy abode ! What wretched company ! What weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth ! And what wishing that they had been wiser, will there be ! These will be the fruits of their folly.

And now let us consider what part we have in this matter ; whether we are capable of doing good, and have a right to the resurrection unto life ; or whether we can only do evil, and are subject to the resurrection unto damnation. And let us consider these things as matters of no common concernment, because, indeed, they concern our everlasting happiness or misery. And if that is not enough to make us attentive to them, I know not what is. If it only concerned our being in the world, or even our well-being, I am persuaded we should dwell upon it continually. It must then be a strange infatuation that will make us think lightly of this great, this everlasting affair, especially as there is no medium betwixt heaven and hell ; so that if we fail of the one, we shall find the other.—And let us remember what was said concerning doing good ; how many things we may have and do, and yet neither do good, nor be capable of doing it. Need I repeat them ? I will help your memory. You may then, as I sufficiently proved, be born in a Christian country, be baptized, confirmed, receive the sacrament, feed the poor, pray in a customary way, attend public worship, be penitent and reform, and have a degree of faith, and yet be incapable of doing good. Now, perhaps, you have
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not half of these ; but if you had them all, you might have no real religion at all. Do not wonder at this. Outward things, whether done for us or by us, as they may be attended with the displeasure of God for unpardoned sins, a guilty conscience, a devilish disposition of soul, and a qualification for damnation, are no proof of a preparation for doing good. Are you convinced of this ? Do you see that to be a Pharisee, fair without, may consist with being foul within ?

But what is the state of your mind ? Are you at peace with God ? Do you know that God for Christ's sake has forgiven you ? I hope you do not think this unnecessary. I grant, indeed, if you have not sinned, it is so. But if you have, you must be pardoned, or perish for ever. If you were condemned to be hanged, would you expect to live without the king's mercy ? And is not the Lord's mercy as necessary when you have sinned against him ? Whatever you think of it, you are as liable to be damned in the one case, as you would be to be hanged in the other. Now I would have you sensible of this, for it is not only necessary to save you from hell, but to prepare you to do good ; inasmuch as you can never please God while you lie under his wrath, or the curse of condemnation for your sins. And while you continue unforgiven, that wrath or curse will remain ; it will never forsake you while in that condition.

Consider then your case, and know what the consequence will be, if you continue in it ! O see what a sinner you are, and how imminent your danger is, in that you may soon be irrecoverably lost ! And, O ! if you saw the number and sinfulness of your sins, the nearness of death, the lake of fire and brimstone, and the fiends that attend you ; what loud lamentation would you make ! The earth would
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ring with your cries ! You would imitate the damn'd in signs of distress, and say, wherever I am is hell, myself am hell ! This would be the way you would take. And why is it not taken ? Has sin blinded your eyes that you cannot see ? Does neither sin nor danger appear ? Can you eat, drink, dress, work, talk, walk, sleep, &c. with a cheerful mind ? Yea, perhaps, jest, sport, play, sing songs, &c. If so, how senseless and unconcerned must you be. Perhaps you will say, would you have us spend all our time in misery ? If there were no other way to escape eternal torments, I should strongly advise it ; for surely short pain is better than long. But whether there is or not, while you are in your sins, sorrow best becomes you. What do you take sin to be ? Is it such a trifle that there is no need to be concerned about it ? If you think so you are much mistaken. There is not an evil in the world which it has not procured. It turned angels into devils, and damned them for ever. Cast Adam and Eve out of Paradise, and brought a curse on the world. It caused the earth to be overflowed with a destructive flood. For this, fire and brimstone were rained from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. It made the earth open and swallow up Korah and his company. For the same thing three and twenty thousand Jews died in one day. And what are the dreadful effects of floods, famines, earthquakes, plagues, pestilences, wars, and a multitude of other natural and moral evils, and, above all, the damnation of hell, but the fruits of mens' folly ? Now can you think it a little thing which does so much evil ? Surely as is the punishment, so is the cause of it ; for the Lord judges with righteous judgment. Consider then the nature and number of your sins, and compare them with those for which many have

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suffered

suffered the loss of all things here, and are now, it may well be supposed, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. O remember Dives who was tormented in that flame; and who, though he sought the smallest relief, could not find it!

And that you may not be insensible of what you have to suffer in that world of woe, if you die in your sins, get the best acquaintance with it you can. And, surely, if you could see it as it is, you would be satisfied, that the torments of the damn'd are intollerable. For, first, there is the loss of all that is good. Heaven, the habitation of the Lord; the abode of the blessed; the seat of angels; the place of harmony and happiness; where hallelujahs, songs of joy and rejoicing are unceasing; in which the inhabitants behold the Lord's glorious essence; and where all the senses of their glorified bodies and souls will be satisfied with unutterable delights, will be entirely and irrecoverably lost; for sinners will be banished from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.— And this will be succeeded with the gaining of hell: A place prepared for the devil and his angels; a dark, dismal habitation; a region of sorrow, lamentation, and woe; where hope never comes; where dark despair broods over their midnight minds; where devils and damned souls associate; where God's wrath is revealed; and where their punishment will be by fire and brimstone, and the worm that never dies.—And how tormenting will this be; for fire (which is a figure of this) produces the most painful sensations. It penetrates all bodies, impregnates them with its properties, and changes them into its own nature. And while it continues to act upon, keeps them in that condition: The effects of which, to all sensible bodies, are intollerably tormenting. In like manner, the
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fire of God's wrath will act upon, enter, and go through the bodies and souls of sinners, and make their pains surpass all the measures of their patience. And a continued action will maintain the intenseness of their torments. This is the damnation of hell. And O what will they suffer from this; for who can dwell with devouring fire! Alas! how the wretches will roar! They will cry for water to cool them! Distracted with pain, they will writhe, wring their hands, and be ready to burst with bellowing out their horrid cries! Every individual will have his portion of pungent pain; and all the accursed crew will unite in one loud peal of weeping and wailing. Nor will their pain ever come to a period.; for after thousands and tens of thousands of years, as their substance and sense will be the same, so will be their sufferings. Oh! eternity, eternity, what wilt thou do to sinners? Must they have no ease? Wilt thou never say, it is enough? Must thy wide womb be filled with the fury of the Lord? O God! how great is thy wrath! Who can endure it! Who would offend thee! For what pleasure of sin would any be plunged into perdition! This, O sinner, will be a part of the punishment of the damned. And yet it is but a part; for, in hell,

There is the *worm that dyeth not*. This is a guilty accusing conscience; For as worms in the bodies of living creatures cause a disagreeable sensation, so the consciences of men will prey upon and torment them in the pit of destruction. Conscience, is that sense, faculty, or power by which men judge of the good or evil of their actions, and for which they acquit or condemn themselves. And notwithstanding that this faculty, when the soul is become thoroughly sinful in its disposition, and has contracted strong habits of wickedness,

wickedness, loses its force, and suffers sinners to sin without much, if any remorse; yet, in some, on certain occasions, it has, as it were, suddenly awoke, and like Sampson, casting off all its cords, made them confess crimes for which they were hanged, and for which they acknowledged they deserved to be damned. Hence, many, out of hell, have roared too horribly to be heard, when none but their own consciences condemned them. Some, under this avenging rod, have pined away with grief; others have lost their senses; and many laid violent hands on themselves. And if the power of conscience be so great here, what will it be there! In hell, all disguises will be taken off; there truth will be seen in its proper colours, for all the sinners sins will stand in array before him in a guilty remembrance of them. Moreover, conscience will act as God's agent in condemning him, and he will, in consequence of that, condemn himself; for there he will do nothing against, but all for the truth. Thus lying under the lashes of his own guilty heart, he will pore upon his past actions, wish that he had been wiser, fret, curse, tear, and torment himself; like a wild bull in a net, he will roar, rage, foam, and be for ever, ever miserable; for the worm dyeth not.

This is the evil of evils, and surpasseth all description. And for what is it that any will have this for their portion? Riches, pleasures, honours, should not give the preference to the way that leads to eternal pain. And yet every trifling profit, taste of sensual gratification, or mark of respect among men, has weight enough to turn the scale, to make most men wicked, and cruelly to destroy themselves for ever. Yea, the common affairs of life, business by which they live, has the same effect; they
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set their hearts upon it, and neither serve the Lord, nor seek to save their own souls. And altho' they know that they must die, it is as if they knew it not; for they live as if they were to live for ever, and care not what will be the consequence. Now of all man's mistakes this is the worst; not only as it is of the greatest concernment, but because after this short and uncertain life, there is no remedy; one miscarriage proves fatal for ever. And what that is we have already seen; it is the loss of heaven, and the gaining of hell.

Having now shewn you what will be the consequence of continuing in sin; I resume my inquiries, I ask in the name of the great God, what your condition is, and what you intend to do? Are you then a Christian; have you, to use the apostle's expression, put on the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you pardoned and renewed? You know, as I told you before, how much a man may have and do, and not have these; and that, without them, they are nothing worth. If then you have them not, conclude that you cannot do good, and by consequence that you do evil; and, therefore, so dying, you must come to the resurrection of damnation.

What is it then that you intend to do? Are you content to sin, and suffer for ever? Suffer! What? Do you know? Or must eternity tell? Is it not in words to convince you? Will only the damnation of hell do it? Terrible cause of conviction! Can you support it? Think what it is. Look before you leap. Eternity is long, and there is a lake of fire and brimstone. Plunge not into it. Stop. You are on the brink of it. One step more may ruin you for ever. O see your danger, and flee from it! See the fiery furnace! See the damned dwelling in it! See how they float in the flames! Yea, open your ears and hear the howlers in hell.

Hear how they lament their case, crying, Fire, Fire, we are tormented in this fire! No part is free! It goes through the whole! Body, soul, senses, and all suffer! Nor does it ever cool; the flame is always fierce! Day and night it feeds upon us! No mercy, no mitigation of misery comes to our relief! God is inexorable! He is a consuming fire! Nor have we any hope! Here our perpetual prison is ordained! Eternity, eternity, is written on its porch; none who come hither return any more! This is the motto of our everlasting misery! Harken too to what their own reflections force from them. O conscience, conscience, how did we slight thee in the days of our prosperity! How faithfully didst thou reprove us for our follies! All the day long, thou didst watch our failings; and till we feared and made thee senseless, just was thy reproof, and useful thy advice. But we heard not, or, hearing, did not obey, or, if obedient, it was but for a time. Yea, we grew bold in disobedience, and dared to deny the audience. And when afflictions reduced us, and gave weight to thy warnings; we promised obedience, but did not perform. How justly then do we lie under thy unrelenting lashes! Thou art become our accuser, and we submit to thy censure and sentence.—Our profitable, or pleasurable, or honourable sins, made us set at nought thy counsel. Through the love of riches, or the excess of worldly care, we neglected the service of God and the salvation of our soul; and now poverty and pain are our only portion, and we cry for water to cool our tongue.—The lovers of pleasure also cry from the pit, O pleasure, pleasure, what hast thou done! Our wrong choice of thee, has undone us: For neither our maker nor our make denied, but rather indulged us with a power and privilege of religious, rational,

tional, and animal delights. But instead of imitating angels with whom we were intended to dwell, in loving, and delighting in the Lord, his service, salvation, the sweet sensations of his love in the soul, and in a longing and looking for his everlasting kingdom, we satisfied ourselves with only rational or sensual delights. The best of us, for oh! we now find it so, were but formalists or philosophers. We dealt in the outward form of religion, but denied the inward power of it; we read and said our prayers, attended public service, &c. but neither knew the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor the love of God, nor the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Our religion, rational as it was, left us destitute of the divine nature, and now we are damned for want of that disposition; for, we find, alas, too late, that nothing less than a heart, loving, adoring, and delighting in the deity and divine things, is sufficient to save from this place of punishment.—Our philosophical pleasures, likewise, deceived us. We surveyed nature, examined the essence of things, considered their relations, combinations, and uses. But, woe unto us, being wise we were foolish; we rested in rational inquiries; in nature we did not discern its author; or if our investigations convinced us that such a being must be, we said not, what and where is he, that we may worship him. Our views terminated in temporal things, and so did our delight; they were rational, but not religious. Alas! then, whatever pleasure we had in the pursuit and use of that knowledge, it is perished. Here we have none; natural truths, in our world of woe, give not so much as the idea of delight. Yea, by how much our understanding raised us above the common race of rebels, by so much is our guilt the greater. So being undeyout philosophers, we were mad!—

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But the greatest number who dwell here, neither sought religious nor rational delight. Sensual pleasure was all our pursuit. The gratification of our eyes, ears, taste, touch, smell, led us entirely from religion and learning. Low grovelling delights, animal pleasures, were what we lived for. Our minds rose not above them. O what reptiles, what wretches were we! The beasts of the field were our brethren; what we knew we knew naturally as they; for we neither affected to be rational nor religious. All our study, care, and labour concerned the pleasure of our bodies. But now the contrary is come upon us, our pleasure is turned to pain, and none pitieth. Woe unto us, for we lived in pleasure and were dead, and now we are damned.—Others lift up their voice and cry, Honour, our delight in honour hath destroyed us! We sought the honour that cometh of men, and not that which is of the Most High. We could not endure the contempt cast upon the imitators of a crucified Christ. To be meek and lowly; to associate with such; to renounce the company, conversation, and ways of people of fortune, figure, and fashion; to be despised by our relations, friends, and acquaintance, on the score of religion, we could not brook. But now we are brought low. Having seen an end of life, and of all that we accounted honourable in it, the scene is changed, shame and contempt succeed; for this place knows distinctions but what the different degrees of sin make! All here are in contempt, because all are accursed of God. What then does that honour which once we sought, and in which we found satisfaction? Alas! we who are damned cannot delight in it. Nor none does our place afford; for here to be high is to be low, the greatest sinner is the deepest sufferer. O cruel honour which made

us ashamed of Christ, his cause, people, salvation, service, and, in effect, of his kingdom! But how much better had it been for us to rank with the lowly, to regard religious things, and to be honoured of him who exalteth the humble and meek! This would have accompanied us to a kingdom, where we should have been kings, and priests unto God. But ah! wretches that we are, our honour is gone, and will never return!

Hear this ye who delight in riches, or pleasures, or honours! See their end! See how the pursuers of them perish! They are idols, gods which cannot save! Will you then yet pursue them, and neglect your souls? If you do, it is at your peril. You will perish! Do you doubt? Remember Dives! He was rich, lived luxuriously, and sought honour, you may be sure, by his ornaments! But, he died, and was damned! Will you go and do likewise? Why? Was it so well with him? Had he water to cool his tongue? O consider his cursed condition; for I am, said he, tormented in this flame! Whether then you are a miser, a covetous person, a lover of the world, or entirely taken up with its cares; a drunkard, a glutton, or lascivious, or so pursues rational or sensual pleasures, as to neglect religious delights; or stands so much on your honour, that you cannot for shame repent, reform, believe, pray, search the scripture, fast, associate with the simple, and, in one word, work out your salvation, and serve the Lord: I say, if you are a sinner of any sort, and will not in future time take the method prescribed by the Most High, you will suffer, suffer more than all the words in the world can signify; for what description or definition can be given of the damnation of hell? And now, suppose you were dying, what would riches, pleasures, or honours do for you? Would they deliver
you

you from death or damnation? You know they would not. Why then do ye set your heart upon them? Why are you entangled with them? Alas, how little do they do in the present time. They perplex and punish more than profit and please. But, if you were dying, and knew your doom, what would you do? O how your soul would shrink, start, tremble! With what askance would it eye the fiends ready to fasten upon it! With what horror behold the fiery furnace! With what dread hear the dismal cries of the damned! O how it would hover upon the border of this neither world! Unfree to forsake its old habitation, it would cling close to it. Like a distressed mariner cleaving to the last shred of a wreck, it would hold to this house of clay. But, ah! when the fatal moment of its separation came, when it was forced off; fiends, like beasts of prey, would fly upon it, hasten it to its appointed place, gorge it with fire and brimstone, and mock it for its madness in coming to a place of punishment, when it might have gone to a paradise of pleasure! Its kindred accursed spirits gone before too, would accost it with, Ah, friend! art thou come also? We wallowed together in wickedness, and now we must wade in woe! O! that thou hadst been wiser than we! We have no pleasure in thy punishment, though we had in thy practice, when we were all out of the pit. Then when the first salutations were over, like Job and his afflicted friends, they would sit in silence till suffering and sorrow forced them into loud lamentation, and bitter accusations of themselves and each other, for making so wretched a choice, and for their mutual assistance in sinning. O horrible!

And yet this would be but the earnest of a greater evil: For when the last day comes, the bodies

dies of those wretched souls would be raised from the grave ; for they that have done evil must come to the resurrection of damnation. The trumpet will sound, and the dead will arise, and come to judgment. Now think what would be the consequence. The judge summons them ; chargeth them with their sins ; they confess the charge ; and he condemns them accordingly. They stand agast ! Their breasts heave ! Limbs shake ! Eyes run down with tears ! But the worst is yet to come, the execution of the awful sentence ! And now, like criminals, who fear the fatal stroke, they wait the word which will issue in their endless ruin. He speaks ; the sentence goes forth : *Depart ye workers of iniquity into everlasting fire !* Dreadful sound ! This closes the sad scene of a wretched life and the last judgment, and fixes their final state ; destines them to dwell with the devil and his angels, where they will be tormented for ever and ever.

Now sinner will this suffice ? Art thou content to have no better portion ? If thou wert doomed to dwell in a dungeon all thy days, to have thy flesh stuck with fire, thy body racked, and burning coals within thee, wouldest thou not curse the day of thy birth, and wish it might not be numbered with the days ? And yet betwixt this and that there is no comparison either in respect of the torment or the time ! O my friend consider this ! And consider it soon, for delays are dangerous ! To-day ; for to-morrow may meet thee in eternity. If then thou wilt prevent the evil of undoing thyself for ever, consider thy case. Thy life is short and uncertain ; every day brings thee nearer thy end ; And all the sands of thy glass will soon be run out. Then like the generations who lived long ago thy place here will know thee no more ; and generations to come will be unacquainted with thee,
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Seeing then that this sorry scene of sublunary things will soon close, and all the world be to thee, in that respect, as if thou hadst never been in it; what should thy one wish be, but how thou mayest do well in eternity. To provide for that, is ten thousand times better than all that riches, pleasures, and honours can do. Nay, there is no comparison betwixt them; for the one is trash, and the other the richest treasure. Wilt thou then suffer me, as one who wishes for thy welfare, to persuade thee to make thy peace with God, before thou makest thy exit out of the world? It is better to die out of than in thy sins; with Lazarus than with Dives. The end of the one is Abraham's bosom, and the other the belly of hell. And these distinctions will subsist for ever. What then can be so desirable as to die the death of the righteous? They rest from their labours, and their works follow them; follow them in the rewards which the righteous will receive at the resurrection of the just.

But what arguments shall I use to persuade thee to this? I have already set before thee the intense and eternal torment of the damned. And if thou art not moved by that, I may despair of making any impression on thee. But I will suppose thou art willing to forsake thy sins, and to lead a new life; that the thoughts of death, of the last day, and of eternal fire, have so far affected thee as to make thee free to be well in the world to come. I applaud thy choice! It is wise to provide for eternity! But the cost must be counted. And yet the price is small. Thy Maker, thy Saviour, thy Sanctifier, requireth nothing of thee but to forsake thy sins, and to receive good things. How easy is this? And yet it is all. Think not that it is too good to be true. But if ye believe not me, believe

lieve the Lord. Witness then his own words: *Why will ye die? Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Turn and live ye. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him turn to the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now these are the words of him who cannot lie; and who, while there is any place for pardon, must be free to fulfil them, having no pleasure in their punishment. What think you then of this? Is it not sufficient to encourage you to turn to the Lord? Be ingenuous! Confess the truth! Labour not to conceal it! Why should you be ashamed of the goodness of God? Were you deep in temporal debt, and could not discharge it; would you be ashamed to own the kindness of your creditor in promising to forgive it? Rather, would you not prize it, publish it, and importune for the performance of it? And if so, how much more cause have you to do it in this case, as the one would but save you from a prison, and the other from perdition. O incomparable kindness!

And now if you will accept his promised favour, be free to comply with his conditions; for on the performance of them only can you expect to be forgiven. He then, as your creditor, commands you to confess and forsake your sins. And yet he does it not so much to shew his authority, as to render it subservient to your salvation. For were he to forgive you without it, what would it signify, when by the next commission of sin, you would contract a new debt. Remember then how it is written: *When a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* Now what sin will you not forsake?

Is any worth retaining? Can you profit as much by any, as by pardon, peace, and heaven? Will it be as well to live and die like the rich man, as to be saints, heirs of God, and inherit a kingdom of consummate happiness? No; there is no comparison betwixt them. To be convinced of this, consider how dishonourable as well as detrimental sin is. To be a rebel against a prince, is ungenerous and unjust. What is it then to rebel against the King of heaven? Alas! language fails, cannot sufficiently signify it; for by how much the Lord is greater and better than men, by so much is rebellion against him criminal and contemptible. But it is detrimental also: It brings trouble of mind, breaks the peace of families, of neighbours, and nations; ruins credit, constitutions, and estates; brings many to death long before the natural time of dying; and, persisted in till death, destroys soul and body for ever. If then you would not be contemptible in the eyes of a holy God, nor be unworthy the care of angels, nor unfit to associate with saints, nor be eternally damned; quit your bad customs, shake of your sinful companions, live a new life, associate with the serious, bear persecution, despise the shame of being religious, be ambitious to become the sons, servants, and heirs of God, to have angels minister to you, to be capable of doing good, to be rich in good works, to have a good conscience in consequence, to lay up treasure above, to die in peace, to leave a good testimony behind, to rise to a glorious reward, and to enjoy it for ever. These are excellent things, and infinitely more than worthy the highest ambition and most ardent pursuit of emperors, kings, nobles, &c. And yet the poor among men may possess them. Pursue then, pursue them with an ardour arguing that you prize them above all that is perishable.

To

To this purpose, if you are a practical sinner, consider the consequence of continuing in that condition. You cannot do it and be safe; for sin is the way to suffering. Decline then that path. Make haste, it is full of danger, and the end is damnation.—If a penitent sinner, then consider that you have contracted a debt which you cannot discharge; a debt of dangerous, of damnable things; for the wages of sin is death. But you have a surety who discharged that debt by the price of his own precious life: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Hence, it is plain, you need not perish; for you may be pardoned. Faith in Christ will be infallibly followed with the forgiveness of sins. To which will be added, as being inseparably connected with it, a new disposition of mind. And, as by the one you will be sensible of your acceptance with God, so by the other of your sonship; and, by both, you will be prepared to do good according to their degree.

But who is thus prepared? Are you? What sense have you of it? Is that sense such as makes you confident? Can you cry, Abba, Father? Is the fear of death done away? Are you sure of going to heaven, if you die as you are? And do you desire to die that you may? Perhaps you will say, If we were sure of going, we should. If! Why that is the very point in question. So then you are not sure. And if so, what is your condition? St. John says, *We know that we are of God.* How? *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Can you say so? If you are a Christian, you can. If you cannot, what will you

do? Will you continue unconverted? Must Christ die in vain for you? Will you go to the devil, though he has died? Sinner, beware! Boast not of to-morrow! See thy danger! In death's uncertainty it lies! What if death come like lightning? Suddenly? Quickly? Alas! What? Canst thou tell? Art thou a prophet? Dost thou foresee thy future fate? Or art thou a fool? A fool, I fear; for if wise thou wouldst know thy destiny. Time and eternity are linked together. Nor do the states of men differ in them; for here every heart has a heaven of holiness and happiness, or a hell of sin and misery. Hence, what they are here, they will be there. And every one who knows what his present state is, knows what his future will be. And who that is wise knows not that? Surely none but fools are ignorant of themselves! Said I not then truly, that thou art a fool who knowest not these things? O dark, dark, is thy soul! Like a blind man on the brink of a pit, thou seest neither backward nor forward, the evil of thy life is hid from thee, and thy danger disappears. Awake sinner, why sleepest thou! Is it a time to be secure? Knowest thou not that thou must die and come to judgment? O anticipate those solemn times! Set them before thee! Bring them near! Try thyself by them! Say, O death, where is thy sting? Alas! that is thy own unpardoned sin! O what a sting! More deadly than a scorpion's! And dost thou dare to die? What in thy sins? That is bold! That is to encounter the king of terrors in complete armour; for such thy sins are to him! Will thou then enter the lists with so formidable a foe? O be afraid! Sharp are his arrows! They will pierce thee to the heart! The guilt of thy sins will centre there! And who shall pluck it thence? None; it will abide for ever; for as death leaves thee, the judgment will find thee!—

And

And now look forward to the last decisive day. Hark how it is ushered in! *The Lord cometh with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God!* These give the alarm! The sound goes to the ends of the earth! Who will not hear? Whether alive or dead none will be deaf to that solemn sound! He shouts in the ears of all, the time of your trial is come! Prepare! Come to judgment! Come and give up your accounts! Come and receive your reward! All hear, and instantly obey! Now see the Judge descending! See the flaming car on which he comes! Behold his attendants, thousands of angels flying in the air! See the spacious plain where all assemble! The judgment seat! The Judge seated! The books opened! Behold the angels gathering the good from the bad, and placing the righteous on the right hand, and the wicked on the left! Now attend to the process! Hark! He is acquainting them with the cause of their coming, telling his friends and foes, that the time, so often foretold, for judging and rewarding men according to their works, is arrived, and that the sentence will be right and irreversibile, give to all their due, and continue for ever.—And now all things being prepared, he summons the righteous, those that died in a state of acceptance with himself; and who, being already acquainted in their consciences, come with boldness to the bar. He applauds those who, like the eldest son of the prodigal's father, never departed from his precepts! Approves of the salvation which prodigals through faith in the sacrifice offered for them, obtained! Accepts the sincerity of upright heathens; who, having no other guide but their own enlightened minds, feared him and wrought righteousness! And to all works calculated and intended to minister to his praise and the profit of men, he assigns a suitable reward. But to

works however well designed, which could only either do no good, or do evil, he assigns no reward. Such he consigns to the fire, and the workers lose the reward of their labour.—Now attend to another part of this solemn transaction! See a different sort of people to be dealt with! He commands the wicked to be brought! The angels obey, and press them into his presence! But O with what reluctance, guilt, confusion, and fearful anticipations of their fate, do they approach! Like criminals, condemned in their consciences, they come before him who was crucified for them, whose grace they received in vain, and to whose commands they were disobedient. He interrogates them touching the use of their time and talents; whether they proportioned their care and labour to the worth and wants of their souls; and whether they worshipped him, and laboured to do good to their fellow-creatures. Now

Among those unhappy sinners, see many of the great men of the earth, to whom the Judge thus speaks. In greatness ye were as Gods among the people! But were you as good as great? Did your example, in sobriety and self-denial, shew to all to whom it extended, how to keep the body under and bring it into subjection? Were you patterns of piety in the several parts of my worship and service, by a constant attendance on my ordinances and by living a life suitable to my laws? Did you offer the daily sacrifice of prayer and praises in your families, and govern them as those who were to give an account? And were you careful to reprove sinners, and to instruct the ignorant as you had time and opportunity? And inasmuch as I made you, in the way of my providence, stewards of much, did you pity the poor and needy, and relieve them according to your ability?—Hear their answer. Alas! O Lord, we did none of those things: We fared sumptuously

ly every day. And what we did in thy worship was for form or fashion's sake; nor were our lives intended to be imitations of thy laws, for we followed our own will, and never consulted thine. No sacrifice, O thou object of adoration, was ever offered by us in our houses. And our families, like our domestic animals, were only kept for profit or pleasure. And so far were we from reproofing sin, that our example instructed and confirmed many in the practice of it. Nor had we any compassion for the poor; rather, they were objects of our contempt, and we would not give them the crumbs that fell from our table.—Then with eyes of indignation he looketh upon them, and saith, Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth, how these witness against themselves! Out of their own mouths they are judged! Other evidence is not necessary! I condemn you to ceaseless sufferings! Go aside, ye cursed creatures, and wait the execution of the sentence!

Next appear a multitude of those whose form, features, polish, quickness, delicacy, and other animal and mental excellencies rendered them the most amiable of the earth. But oh! how changed! Where is now the fine form, regular features, charming complection, sparkling eyes, well set hair, &c? Where those ornaments they so much delighted in, the art that adjusted them, the gay appearance they made, and the emulation of each other? Where those gay scenes of life, dancings, plays, concerts, cards, songs, insipid conversation, scandal, thoughtless gaiety, and an endless train of trifles in which they passed the time of their trial for eternity? O where are they? Ah! friend, canst thou in yon distorted form, dark hue, heaving breasts, sad countenance, streaming eyes, down-cast looks, loud lamentations, wringing of hands, convulsive motions, &c. discern any of the former things?

things? Alas, alas! are these those who, to preserve the sprightliness of their spirits, to prevent a gloom on their countenance, would not think of death and the last day; saw no beauty in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; found no pleasure in prayer and praise to God; made no account of their Maker, Saviour, and Sanctifier; despised the low way of being religious, and of preparing for this awful time? O the madness of preferring dress, trifling amusements, silly diversions, &c. to a reconciled God, a precious Christ, the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Ghost, an intercourse with heaven, an earnest of it, doing good, and being prepared to give up accounts with joy! But now observe his motion! He turns towards them! Hark! He addresseth them! O ye daughters of men, were your souls or bodies the principal object of your attention? Did you delight as much in ornamenting your minds with the graces of my spirit, as in adorning your bodies with what was elegant? Had you as much pleasure in knowing and doing my will, as in learning and living according to the modes of life? Were you as careful to do good as you had ability, time, and opportunity for? Speak! Why are you silent? Am I not your Judge? How did you live? What end had you in view? Then breaking silence, they say, Ah, Lord, our souls were little understood, and less cared for! To provide for, and pleasure our bodies, engaged all our time and talents! Thy service did not suit us; we thought it fit only for those who wanted taste for the things of time and sense! As for our neighbours, whether they were saved or lost, had or had not the necessities of life, made no part of our care. We lived to the flesh, and not to the spirit; for time, and not for eternity! But, woe unto us, we now see that life was lent us for a far better purpose.

purpose than we put it to! We behold a glorious company (and such we might have been!) on thy right hand with bodies brighter than the sun, serene countenances, and ready to receive a crown! But what are we? Our hue is dark! Our hearts forebode! O that we had lived like them! Alas! O Lord, we are sorry for our sins! And must our pleasures end in pain? We reflect on the gay scenes of life in which we never remembered thee! We call to mind our many toils in accomplishing small purposes! But we would be at no pains to perform thy pleasure! Our affections were not placed on thee! Our time and talents all ran to waste in regard of thee! How vilely did we requite thy love in living and dying for us! Alas! it was the least of our care to make thee a grateful return for that kindness! Nor was thy law a light to our path, we never consulted thy precepts touching any part of our practice! Our own will and the maxims of the world were our only rule of living!—To which the judge replies. It is enough! I know it! I saw your way in the world! Mine eyes were ever upon you! And I looked to see when you would turn unto me! I hearkened to hear the voice of your supplication! But I looked and hearkened in vain, for you went on in the foolishness and frowardness of your hearts! Then my bowels were turned within me, and I said, O that these were wise, that they understood what their end will be! Their life will soon see an end, and then, O then what will they do? Alas! life is gone, the hour of judgment is come, and now I must reward you according to what you have done. To dwell then with devils where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched, I doom you! Angels, take them away, that they may be hurled into hell. Instantly those wretched fair are utterly confounded! Their cries pierce the
 skies!

skies! But none pityeth. Their lovers have forsaken them! The objects of their love are destroyed! God's mercy is clean gone! The angels have them in derision! Devils rejoice over them, and wait to plunge them into the pit! O what a contrast to their former condition!

Now turn your eyes and see a multitude of a character highly inconsistent with their condition! Their character is sacred, being styled the priests of God; but their condition is that of sinners. Hear the Judge addressing them! Alas! I am sorry to see your reverences in so wretched a condition! But what induced you to become ministers? Was it because you were qualified to discharge the duty, and were determined to do it? If that was the case, it was laudable. But, alas! though there be apostates among you, yet the majority of you were not the men you should have been when you assumed that sacred office. But you are upon your trial, and shall have justice done you. Had you then the knowledge of myself as the Saviour, by the pardon of your sins and the purification of your spirit? Without this you did not belong to me; for if any man have not my spirit, he is none of mine. Nor could you sufficiently know the truth necessary to be preached to others but by this principle of it in yourselves. You could only have ideas of it, which, when reduced to practice, was but dealing in truths unfelt, and ineffectual; for having no union with me in your spirit, your words had no energy, and so did no execution—And what was your call to, and qualification for, the ministry? Were you divinely moved to minister in holy things? Had you inward intimations of its being my pleasure that you should preach? And was my word as fire in your heart that you could not forbear? Had you, in the execution of your office, supernatural assistance; light
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to see, and power to hold forth the word of life? For, be sure, I give not only grace, but also the knowledge of my will touching the work, and assistance in it, to all whom I commission to preach. —What were your doctrines? Did you preach *Me* as the one mediator betwixt God and man? Did you insist on my death as the only meritorious cause of salvation? Did you also preach faith in me as the way to find forgiveness and all other spiritual benefits? Did you likewise contend for the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins and the renewing of the Holy Ghost? And did you preach good works, to all who were capable of them, as the way to retain and improve their grace, to keep their consciences free from offence, and increase their crown of rejoicing? —What manner of life do you live? Was your life a living law to all your people, illustrating and confirming every truth you taught; and thereby contradicting and utterly condemning that accursed maxim of doing as you said, and not as you did?

Now these are the truths according to which I shall try you. Did you then experimentally know that you were accepted of God, adopted into his family, and made heirs of eternal life? If you did not, remember, that I said, you were none of mine. Nor can I retract, because it is an eternal truth, that being the grand criterion of a Christian. Need I tell you then to whom you belonged? Is that necessary? Know ye not, that all who are not of me, are of the devil? And was not your heart so dark and dead, that you neither discerned the evil of sin, nor had any desire of salvation from it? Hence, you were self-sufficient, saw no need of me as a mediator; therefore you had no dependence on me. Alas! I neither dwelt in you as a principle of divine light, life, comfort, &c. nor was I desired of you. Seeing then

then that you had no light to see, nor desire to be found in, the right way; what sort of guides could you be to others? At the best you were blind ones, and that was bad enough.—Nor did I ever move you to take upon you the office of the ministry. You had no call from me. I did not send my enemies on my errands. You ran then before you were sent.—Neither did I ever assist you; so your word returned void; it did no execution; no good was ever done by it; you turned none from the error and evil of their ways; your flocks remained uninformed, unreformed, and unrenewed.—And, indeed, your doctrines were not calculated to answer any good purpose; for some of you preached that which was false in itself, and others that which was unapplicable to the people, and some that, which, though right, yet as it came from you, had no effect.—And as touching the practice of many of you, it was evil; you lived in the common sins of the age, whereby many were confirmed in their wickedness, and some induced to renounce both religion and revelation; concluding, that as you contradicted both in your practice, your faith in them was feigned, and the profession of it only designed to answer some profitable temporal purpose to yourselves. I charge you then with being destitute of the divine nature, with having sinned in all the parts of your practice, as intruders into the ministry, and for contributing much to the destruction of many by your preaching and practice. Now make your defence. What say you? Have I not said the truth? Can you deny any part of this charge? Was not your soul dark, dead, and destitute of me? Was it not also diabolical in its disposition, loving and desiring nothing but the world and wickedness? And did you not treat it as the greatest trifle, neither knowing nor caring what would

would become of it? And yet in this senseless, sinful, and careless condition, you took upon you a cure of souls. A cure of souls! Alas! ye were physicians of no value. You understood not their case, so you wrought no cure. And yet you were content. It did not grieve you that your people were ignorant and wicked. You had what you entered into the office for; profit, pleasure, and honour. But now see what it is come to! O how many accuse you as one cause of their continuing in sin! What numbers were deceived by your doctrine! What multitudes were confirmed in wickedness by your example! How many were prevented from seeking salvation by the part you acted in persecuting my servants! And how many did you turn out of the way by the same thing! Alas! you were foolish, wicked, preached for hire, helped none, hindered many, persecuted the righteous, and knew not me! And now ye unholy, false, foolish, and formal preachers, what reason can you assign why I should not condemn you? Surely none, the evil being all your own. I am sorry for you; for your sufferings will be great. As you had not the double portion of my spirit your office required, you have your double offences, your own and many others to answer for; and, therefore, must have a double portion of punishment. O how different will your portion be from what it was when you walked in pride, lived luxuriously, lorded it over the people, led them into error, kept them in ignorance, and confirmed them in wickedness! Alas, alas! your own blood, and the blood of many others is upon you! O how well for you that you had not been born! How profitable that you had not been preachers! Or that you had been of my constituting and commissioning, and faithfully discharged your duty! Then had you been numbered with those on

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my right hand, who, as they were faithful over a few things, shall be made rulers over many. But now there is no choice! The time for that is past, and will never, never return! Woe unto you, for evil is coming upon you!—As for you whom I sent; for, such, alas! I see among you, you out lived the gracious principle I planted in you, and the commission I gave you. Honour, affluence, and ease, through your unguardedness, begot pride, covetousness, and sensuality. Then, such of you as continued to minister, principally fought yourselves, your applause, profit, and pleasure, and not my honour and the good of men. Your intercourse with me also ceased, you did not seek my blessing, nor did I communicate my help to your heart, nor prosper your labours. You became corrupt, and corrupted others; for your example caused many to stumble. Yea, some of you apostatized both in principle, practice, and preaching; your hearts became unholy, your lives irreligious, and you denied salvation by me! You are twice dead, and there remains for you only the blackness of darkness for ever. Alas! how evil is your case! Better had it been for you not to have known the right way! But you have undone yourselves, and must bear your own burthen. O ye apostates, what will you do with the wages of unrighteousness? How endure that degree of damnation which is due? Ye sold me, and sold yourselves to work wickedness? Cursed creatures! Crucifiers of myself a second time! Murderers of yourselves and of many others!—And now all of you, whether apostates or others, I sentence to that sort and degree of sufferings my justice obligeth me to! My mercy, in your case, now hath no place! This is no time for that! A time was when you might have been interested in it, but you would not. Your place, your acquirements,

ments, the figure you cut, and the company you kept, puffed you up with pride, self-conceit, &c. and set you above seeking me, and regarding serious things. Prepare for your punishment!

Now see a promiscuous company approach, to whom he thus applieth: How was your time taken up? What did you propose to yourselves as the end of living? Did you intend to please me, profit your neighbours, and prepare for eternity? Alas! your being on the left hand, indicates that you have lived to a purpose which I did not approve. I see among you a great variety; some of you waded in wealth, others swam in pleasure, some soared in fame, many of you had the conveniences of life, more only the necessaries, and not a few lived in poverty and distress. Some of you were wise, others foolish, some learned, others ignorant. Many of you had much leisure from the labour of life, others had the greatest part of your time taken up with it. You were likewise of different generations, nations, and ages. But notwithstanding this variety, I find you all agreed to forget me, neglect your souls, and to make provision for eternity. I see you are all in your sins, unforgiven, unpurified, and unprepared to meet me. But to shew how inexorable you are, I shall remind you of what I did both to prevent and to save you from sin and suffering. I put my laws into your mind and heart, for I gave you an understanding of my will and power to perform it. To which, if you had been obedient, you had been preserved from sinning. I also provided for you as sinners, by the sacrifice of myself; therefore, if after offending, you had repented and put your trust in me, I would have pardoned and renewed you. I likewise had many witnesses among you of my wisdom, power, and goodness: I gave you rain and fruitful seasons: I caused my

sun to shine upon you by day, and my moon and stars by night : You had also daily revolutions ; not a moment did the earth, on which you lived, stand still ; it was always in motion to give to every part of its inhabitants the benefits of day and night, summer and winter : To move your minds, I made thunder and lightning play over your heads, and the earth to quake under your feet : I sent the sword, famine, and pestilence among you : I afflicted you in your minds, bodies, and estates : I left you at uncertainties, touching the continuance of life, and gave you signs of death, and of the last day, by your mortality, and by punishing some of you for your sins.

But ah ! How did I labour in vain ! The law of your mind was soon destroyed, your understanding became dark, and your will dead. You likewise contracted many evil habits and customs, which, added to the corruption of your hearts, made sin easy and pleasant ; and, therefore, though I strove with, and commanded, yea beseeched you to return unto me, yet ye would not. The low delights of a perishing world, you preferred to me, my salvation, service, and kingdom. The pleasures of sin, although but for a season, were more to you than all that I could do. And notwithstanding that I warned you of your danger, yet you went on from one degree of sin to another, till there was no remedy. Yea some of you proceeded so far as to deny my being, others my providence, some my word, and all of you, in effect, my laws, for you would not live according to them. O how wretchedly was your time spent ! What mean pursuits ! What vile practices ! Any thing was enough to engage your heart, time, and talents ! O how little did you consider your obligations to me ! Whether I was pleased or displeased with what you did, gave you

you no concern! You cared not for me; so your own will, and not mine, was consulted and done. And when I reprov'd you for your follies, some of you promised to repent and reform, but never performed; others who went farther, did them but in part; and some who did them perfectly, did so only for a time; for all of you died in your iniquities! Ah! how was my soul grieved, when I saw you set your hearts on things beneath; when some of you lived only to lay up money, others to get the conveniences or necessities of life, and many only a hard subsistence! And I said in myself, O that these were wise, that they understood what good things I have to give, and what satisfaction they might find in serving me! But you would not make proof of my holiness, my peace, and my joy, and thereby have a foretaste of a happy eternity, that you might long to live with me, nor would you delight yourselves in that, which to me, while I lived in your world, was as my meat and drink: My ways, to you, were not ways of pleasantness, nor my paths peace. You all walked in your own ways, which were not good: Whatever seemed good to yourselves, however disagreeable to me, was done. You had no pleasure in contemplating the wisdom, greatness, and goodness, displayed in my outward works; nor did you consider my holiness, justice, truth, mercy, and long-suffering, exercised in the government of yourselves and others. Neither was it any thing to you, that I died to redeem you. My daily benefits in temporal things, and whatever I did to your minds in the use of means and by immediate acts to restore you to holiness and happiness, had no weight. Yea, you were so intent on living, that you forgot death, the last day, and eternity! But ah! they are all come; death is past, the last day is present, and eternity is at the door. And

now where are all the things for which you lived? Ah! where are they? Alas! all that you lived for, is either dead, or will soon be destroyed, for the earth shall be burnt up. Ah wretched creatures, to live for that which has left you! Had you lived to me, I would have continued with you, and consoled you in every conflict, carried you with courage through death, and acquitted you in the last day. But you would have none of me; and now I will have none of you. I stand not this day as your advocate, that office is ceased. I am your judge, and will deal with you according to your demerit.

And that you may see the loss you sustain by sinning, I set before you the rewards of the righteous by appointing them their place and portions. Hear me then, O my beloved, in what I have to say: Ye glorified me on the earth by believing in, and obeying me, and now I will glorify you with myself for ever. After sinning, you trusted in my merit and spirit, which brought pardon, peace, and purity. These made you mine, and candidates for my kingdom. And though you have not all been equally faithful, yet as I now find you interested in me, I appoint you all a place within the limits of my kingdom. But my throne is the centre; and, therefore, according to your degree of well-doing, shall your nearness to it be. And now go up and receive from my Father the reward of your works. Angels, do your office, conduct them! Then with motion quick as lightning they ascend! Heaven opens to admit them! Angels wait to receive them! The Father welcomes them in, appoints their place, assigns their portion, commands that garments of distinguished lustre, palms of victory, and crowns of glory be given them! And now their sufferings and sorrows all see an end! Neither shall they know want any more; for he that dwells among them shall

shall lead them to fountains of living waters! And they shall serve him day and night in his temple! All this is lost to you.—And now, wretched creatures, behold your place! Hell, disclose! Be before these as thou art before me; without a covering! See its dimensions! Ah, it is deep and large, without bottom or shore! It is full of the fury of the Lord; a fiery stream ever urges with waves of sulphureous flame! That then ye ungodly is your habitation! There you must dwell for ever; for when millions of years have measured out your misery, it will be no nearer the end! Nor will the furiousness of the flame ever diminish! I kindled it in mine anger, and it shall be kept up! Can ye endure it? Are you as stone? Without sense? Past feeling? Ah! were you so, it would be well with you! But you shall be tormented in it! Every part of your soul and body the fire will feed upon, and punish with the most exquisite pain! Then shall I be avenged of you for all that you have done!—Go then ye great ones, ye wretched fair, ye false prophets, and all who have lived and died in iniquity, go to your place and portion! Dwell with devils! Be tormented with fire and brimstone! Bear the upbraidings of your consciences! Lament a lost heaven! Weep, wail, and gnash your teeth! O ye abominable, what blessings did I bestow upon you! What pains did I take with you! What patience had I with you! But you made only evil returns; you broke my laws, abused my mercies, neglected my salvation, grieved my spirit, and wearied my patience! And now I will shew you no favour! You shall have judgment without mercy! And while eternity endures, you shall lie under my righteous wrath! Never, never, shall you be released from it!—But ah, how they linger! How tardy their steps! They hasten not to suffer as they did to
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sin! O how they hover on the brink of hell! They want Curtius's courage to leap into the gulph! Sinners, are you afraid? Does the fire, like the flame of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, flash upon you? Alas! If the brink be so bad, what will the burnings be! O wretched creatures, well may you fear before you feel! But, go; no more delays! Angels, quicken their pace! Cast them into hell! Now they move; millions in a moment are hurled headlong into the burning lake! Down to the centre they descend! Then they rebound to the surface! And thus by turns they sink and swim! There they taste the bitter pains of eternal death, a death they sought by their sins, for they would not serve me! This then is their recompense! Nor does help or hope come to their relief! Wretched beings! Hark! All hell rings with their cries! O how they curse and accuse themselves, as the cause of all that they suffer! Our sins, our sins, have brought us hither! We blame neither our Maker nor our make. We had all that we could have; reason, a religious principle, a Saviour, sabbaths, the outward evidences of God's wisdom, greatness and goodness, divine and human instructions, and whatever else that was necessary to save us from sin, to make us serve the Lord, and to prepare us for a better place than this! O that we had lived soberly, righteously, and godly in the world! Then had we escaped all this evil. But we would not. And now we are justly doomed to dwell where the worm dieth not. Woe unto us! O the intenseness of our torments! And the thought of eternity adds to our misery! Could we see to the end of our sufferings, hope would spring up in hell! But, fire and brimstone, a guilty conscience, devils, and dark despair, conspire to curse us! Alas! all is lost; farewell hope and happiness for ever! And O thou profoundest hell, in thee we must for ever dwell!

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Now, sinners, I have set before you the eternal torments of the damned, which will assuredly be your portion, if you persist in sin. Will you not then turn to the Lord? Why will you not? For what would you suffer temporal torments? Would you lie upon a bed of fire for seven years? Could all the riches, pleasures, and honours in the world tempt you to it? I believe not. How is it then that you do not fear eternal fire? Is it less to be feared than temporal? Alas! it is ten thousand times more! Why then so fearful of the one, and so fearless of the other? It is because you are sensible of what concerns your body and time, but not what regards your soul and eternity! O shameful ignorance! It is being fools in the worst sense of the word! But what will you do? Will you die so? Will you be damned? If you die asleep in your sins, you will. Awake then, why sleep ye? Your damnation slumbereth not. Know ye not that death and hell are near? To-morrow you may be in both! To-day then hear his voice! He cries, turn ye, turn ye, why will you die? Sinner hear, hear the long neglected call! O hear him that speaketh from heaven! He speaks by his spirit, his word, his providence, his ministers, and by many other means. Be obedient that you may be blest. Think not that by disobedience you shall do well. Consider with whom you have to do; a holy, a just, a jealous God; a God who all your life has watched over you for good, has fed and preserved you, and borne with your disobedience! O what indulgence! But say not that he will do so again! Remember, he has appointed a day to do justice in; a day wherein all that die in disobedience will be damned. Will you meet him in your sins? Ah what a foe will you find him; for he is a consuming fire to offenders! Settle it then in your heart that you will be his. And do
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not delay the execution of your purpose, lest you be plucked away in his displeasure. Nor need any thing be urged to evidence the necessity of this, save the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the dreadful consequence of delaying too long. Will you then hesitate one moment to turn your heart to the Lord, and to regulate your life by his law? Do it immediately, and thereby prevent the danger of being undone by delays! O consider the preciousness of the present time! It is all that you can call your own. The rest may or may not be while you are alive. And for what evil or earthly thing will you run the risk of being ruined for ever? Surely if you love yourself, you will secure the salvation of your soul. Remember then your sins, repent of them, reform from them, believe on Christ for and pray till you find the pardon of them, get your heart made good by grace, live religiously by serving the Lord, charitably by ministering to the good of men, lay up treasure in heaven, and thus prepare to meet the Most High. O how profitable and pleasant are these things; how good for time, and how much better for eternity! They will do infinitely better for you than serving the devil and enduring damnation. But I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; choose your portions, make or mar yourself. But choose life and blessing, that the Lord may be glorified, and that you may be happy for ever!

And you that are capable of doing good, remember your obligation to it, and act accordingly. Be ambitious to serve the Lord in the manner most agreeable to him. Walk with him in spirit by an actual and continued advertence to his presence, and by fearing, loving, delighting in, and adoring him; by being grateful for his benefits, and by speaking and acting in all things as may be most to his

his honour. Labour likewise for the good of men! Be wise to win souls to the right way; to the salvation and service of the Lord. Let your example, reproofs, instructions, prayers, &c. conspire to do this. Profit as many as possible in temporal things, by your fortune, favour, labour, and advice. Thus sow righteous seed, and reap the reward of it in a resurrection unto life.—And for your encouragement, consider the consequence, the greatness of the reward. Whatever you do for the honour of God, and the good of men, will, in this world, afford the most excellent fruit; the testimony of a good conscience, greater favour with God and men, and, in all probability, an increase of temporal things, will be consequent on it; for he that soweth much shall reap much. In the hour of death, a sense of having discharged your duty, will inspire a confident expectation of a crown; with the dying apostle you will say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me in that day. In the day of judgment, you will stand distinguished in the presence of God, angels, and men, according to your degree of well-doing. And in eternity, it will redound to you in honour and glory, and unutterable delights. Walk then worthy of your calling in the highest degree, and thereby increase your crown of rejoicing for ever.

JAMES

J A M E S, Chap. ii. ver. 19, 20, 21.

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

OUR apostle having to do with men whose faith in principle tended to make void the law in practice; set himself to refute the error, and stop the torrent of that dangerous doctrine.

This is done, 1. By defining, commending, and comparing their faith. 2. By shewing the insufficiency of it. And, 3. By exhibiting that which produceth good works. Of which I shall offer some explication, and conclude with a word of use.

I. *Thou believest that there is one God.* This one God is opposed to all other Gods, whether the work of men, or those whose office gives them an inferior right to that title. He is that supreme Being who was, is, and is to be; without beginning and without end; whose nature is spiritual and holy, and whose attributes conspicuously appear in the works of creation and providence. His wisdom, in devising the natures, capacities, and use of all things; his power, in giving being to, preserving, and

and governing them; and his goodness, in replenishing the earth with blessing adapted to the condition of every creature.

This divine being, is the first object of faith. Things that are seen, are objects of sense. But he is invisible, and, therefore, to be believed. Nor is it necessary that revelation, whether external or internal, assist. They, indeed, corroborate the evidence of this important truth; but *the invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made.* Visible things having all the signatures of consummate skill, inimitable art, energetic power, and profusion of goodness, afford the most unexceptionable evidence of a Deity, possessor of all possible perfections; they exhibit to reason, (for reason, in this case, is the root of faith) that these are the works of a wise, powerful, and good God: which issues in a belief of his being.

Believing that there is one God, likewise implies some judgment of the extent of his essence and natural attributes. And that he cannot be circumscribed by human conception, but is infinite in respect of extent, is the most agreeable notion of Deity: *Do not I, saith he, fill heaven and earth?* And with this corresponds the Psalmist's account: *Whether shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whether shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand find me, and thy right hand shall lead me.*—But notwithstanding that he is more than co-equal with creation; yet he neither incorporates with, nor is interrupted by it, but remains intire, and pervades whatever is more easily than air or light, the most pervious bodies. The properties natural to, and inseparable from, his essence, are omnipre-

sence and omniscience; he is present with, and privy to, all things, and unerringly discerns their essences, actions, and ends: *Can any hide himself that I shall not see him, saith the Lord. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: But all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

This faith, also includes a belief of his moral nature and government. The holiness of his nature is exhibited by the purity of his precepts, which have for their object and end, his own glory, and the present and future felicity of men. And to which, from all who have attained to the use of reason, complete conformity is required. Hence it is, that diviations from duties; whether in things contrary to, or short of them, subject to the censure of justice, and expose to the wrath of God; which evidence the strictness of his justice, the evil of sin, and the absolute necessity of his mercy; the nature, cause, and way of receiving, such understood, they know *that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*, satisfying his justice by the sufferings of his Son; and, therefore, can be just in maintaining the purity of his law, and yet justify the ungodly who believe in Christ Jesus. To believe then the nature, works, and government of God, is to believe that there is one God.

And notwithstanding that this faith is superficial, and, comparatively, of but inconsiderable service; it had the apostle's approbation: *Thou doest well.* But though he prefers it to infidelity; yet to shew its insufficiency, he opposes to it the faith of the fiends: *The devils also believe, and tremble.* These competitors with men, in respect of believing, were once angels of light, whose happiness consisted in the purity of their nature, a proper subordination to, and practical observance of, their Creator's will

will. But being free agents, and in a state of probation, by a disobedience which their case admitted, they forfeited those heavenly powers with which their spiritual nature was replenished: Holy light, love, meekness, humility, &c. were corrupted and turned to their contraries. Hence they became dark, hateful, proud, fiery spirits; opposers of God and goodness, as being contrary to their depraved principle; and, as a consequence, were expelled their native abodes, and sentenced to situations more agreeable to their degraded condition. Notwithstanding, they retain some knowledge of God, and form right conceptions of him in what concerns themselves: therefore they *believe*. In which they correspond with the rational believers among men: for the word *also* connects the sentences, and forms a comparison betwixt them. To which (believing) their nature is well adapted, being spiritual, and therein agreeing with the nature of God. And though deprived of the divine similitude, and set at a greater distance from his throne; yet they remember their once glorious state and place. Nor is it probable that all their misery issues from their own evil principle. Some degree, it is presumed, is inflicted by the Almighty, as the consequence of their crimes. How easy then for them to believe, that there is one God!—But they tremble also. They feel his displeasure in present, and believing that they must for ever feel it future, punishment, he is terrible to them; hence they fear, and fear makes them tremble. But how few sinners, among men, fear and tremble? And yet, let their faith be what it will, they are condemned to dwell with the devil. So great a similarity of circumstances then should produce the same sensations; faith, fear, and trembling should be as common among sinners as among satan and his angels.

angels. But, alas! it is not so; for the faith of those whom our apostle opposes, leaves them so insensible of their sin and danger, that they neither feel nor fear the wrath of God; they feel it not in a guilty conscience, nor fear it in a belief of future punishment; so they are unconcerned, they smile unsmitten, though small their cause to smile, for the Lord is angry with them. But not so satan; he shakes under the rod of God's righteous wrath; he feels, believes, fears, and trembles; and therefore his faith is more effectual than that of those unhappy men who believe that there is one God, but without any motion of mind consequent on it. And this, I fear, is the faith of most men.

II. I shall, in the next place, shew the insufficiency of but so believing. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* The faith of those who believe that there is one God; but which neither produceth fear nor trembling, is insufficient to a degree, that renders them inferior to satan in all that concerns the soul. They know not that they are sinners against whom God's wrath is revealed; they believe not that their damnation slumbereth not; they are blind and upon the brink of hell and know it not. Yea, their faith suffers them to live as if they had not a soul to save; it neither produces inward nor outward fruit; the fear of God is not before their eyes, nor his love in their hearts: It is dead, and therefore cannot do them any good.—The faith of devils, though more reasonable and fruitful, does not save them; they still continue in sin, and without hope of salvation: “For hope that comes to all, comes not in hell.” They believe the justice of God as standing opposed to them, and engaged to perpetuate their punishment. And having no promise of pardon, they have

have no faith in God's mercy, that attribute to them affords no relief. Hence though they excel many believers among men; yet their faith is not effectual, it leaves them in their damnable state. Thus by a striking, but extremely mortifying comparison, the apostle has discovered the insufficiency of but believing that there is one God. And to convince them more fully of their folly and danger, he appeals to their will. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* Wilt thou be convinced, that the faith, which in men, is not followed with fear, and but forms it in devils, is no more what it should be, nor better answers the end of believing, than a dead body performs the business of a living man? *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* Hence, it is clear, that neither the faith of wicked men, nor of devils, can suffice; that both leave them in their sins, and sentenced to everlasting sufferings. Therefore sinners of every denomination and degree, whatever their faith be, are in a condemnable condition. But this will more fully appear from a description of the faith of Abraham, and of all true believers.

III. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.* Faith, in Abraham, was prior to works; and his justification by faith preceded his justification by works. Agreeable to which, it is said, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* And that his faith had this effect, and was what all others should be, that it was acceptable to God, and imitable of men, is evident from its being cited by St. Paul, and made characteristic of the faith of the primitive Christians.

Christians. So, to convince the Jews of their error in seeking salvation by the law, he opposed them with this particular: *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory. But he hath not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* Which righteousness, according to the sense of the parallel text, cited to prove the same thing, was the forgiveness of sins: *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* This restores sinners to the forfeited favour of God, by removing the cause of his wrath. Hence, on Abraham's believing to righteousness, he was called the friend of God. From which, it is evident, that as foolishness is the effect of a dead, and fear of the devils, forgiveness is the fruit of Christian, faith.—And faith is peculiarly calculated for this: The believer confesseth his sin, renounceth his own righteousness, and depends wholly on the merit of him who was delivered for his offences, and raised again for his justification. Thus by confiding in his death as the procuring cause of salvation, and in his person for the fulfilling of his promise, he is delivered from the evils he feels and fears: *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.*

The second fruit of faith, is a pure heart. With this St. Peter corresponds, when he says, *Purifying their hearts by faith.* And, St. Paul, to convince the Galatians of their folly in admitting circumcision, &c. interrogates them with, *Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* And in recounting the Lord's kindness to Abraham, with a view of exhibiting its extent in respect of others, he says, *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.* Spirit,

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as it respects the present state of man, signifies a right state of mind, a heart renewed by the Holy Ghost. And this, like the former, is absolutely necessary; for, though forgiveness frees from the guilt of past sin; yet if the heart remain unholy, it will produce a practice agreeable to itself. But faith herein is effectual; which, though it neither saves meritoriously nor efficiently, but only conditionally and instrumentally; yet by depending on Christ's merit and spirit, (and producing earnest endeavours after salvation) holiness is derived into the heart, whereby it assumes a new form; instead of discovering the guilt and power of sin and the danger of being damned, it now exhibits a reconciled God, a renewal in love, and a glorious prospect of heaven; and in lieu of a painful desire of divine things, it has a pleasant possession of them.

The third fruit is practical, and flows from the principle implanted. And this being that by which the principle is preserved; (for by works faith is made perfect) it is stiled a *faith that works by love*. Faith, as a grace, is the eye, ear, appetite, touch, &c. of the soul, by which it sees, hears, tastes, feels, &c. in a spiritual sense. And as these senses are exercised on their proper objects, not only the habit of holiness remains unimpaired, but blessings are derived from heaven, and fruit is brought forth to the honour of God, and the good of mankind: *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.* The principle of faith produceth good works, and good works strengthen faith. So much then of the grace and use of faith as any have and make, so far it is perfected and affordeth good fruit. This is evident from the instance of Abraham. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar.* Abraham, who had many years been

been justified from the breaches of a broken law by believing, was now justified by obedience to it. By the heroic art of offering his son, he proved the genuineness of his faith, gave testimony that it had purified his heart and made it obedient to God. This was his legal justification; which had the same effect as his evangelical's: peace with God was the fruit of pardon, and the continuance of that peace, the effect of obedience.

A second branch of obedience, is love to mankind. This they who only believe that there is one God, are destitute of. An indirect evidence of which, is this: *If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit?* This sort of charity is the fruit of a dead faith. While the heart remains unrenewed, it is contracted within its own narrow sphere, and seeks only its possessors temporal, and neither the temporal nor spiritual profit of others. Living faith produces a contrary practice. It deals not in words only, but secunds them with works of a correspondent kind. To which purpose, St. John says, *Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.* This is effected by faith. The spirit, consequent on believing, fills the heart with universal philanthropy. Hence having the divine nature, they love like its author; delight in the good, and pity the evil part of mankind, and contribute whatever may conduce to the advantage of both. Thus through the instrumentality of faith, the heart being purified and prepared to love God and men; it is, remotely, the cause of that love. And inasmuch as this faith is productive of forgiveness, a pure heart, and universal obedience, with many

many other excellent things, it is sufficiently distinguished from the faith of sinners and devils. *

I shall now apply what has been spoken. And if believing that there is one God, will not suffice, what will athiests do! These, in religious knowledge, are on a level with animals: For *what they know, they know naturally, as brute beasts*. But if by internal and external teaching, the Almighty manifest his will; why, in many, does no trace of it remain? Is it because they are given up? That is the cause: *Because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, he gave them over to a reprobate mind*. Sin blinds and hardens; and the Lord in just displeasure abandons them. So being cut off from spiritual things, the soul has nothing but temporal ones to work upon. In which state, man is only a superior sort of animal; led by his senses, and without conscience to controul him: therefore he concludes, that there is no God. An ignorance the more inexcusable, as it is opposed by the evidence of sense; all nature conspiring to confront and confute it by the ample testimony it gives.—Now this denial of the Deity, necessarily infers disobedience to him; but many also who believe his being, *in works deny him, being abominable*

* To prevent mistakes, I shall subjoin a contracted account of these contrary, though consistent methods of justification. Abraham was justified by faith, from his sins, when it was accounted to him for righteousness; which reconciled him to God and characterized him his friend. This was his first personal justification; which St. Paul, to reconcile the Jews to, who sought salvation by works, so earnestly contended for; and, by which only, a personal sinner can be justified.—His second justification, insisted on by St. James, to confute those who pretended to be believers, while they lived in disobedience to God's laws, was by works. To be justified by works, is to be obedient to the law under which we live; which, as it cannot justly accuse, it necessarily acquits. Abraham, in the instance of offering his son (which was a specimen of his life after believing unto righteousness) lived up to the law of his Lord; and, therefore, was justified by it. This followed his justification by faith, and was what every believer should closely imitate.

abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. What they profess in words, they deny in works; and, therefore, though verbal believers, they are practical atheists. And perhaps the reason why many believe neither results from observing his works, nor flows from an inward conviction of his presence; but is a traditionary thing, consisting of words without ideas annexed to them. Hence they are perpetually using his name; sometimes in praise, and sometimes in profaneness: For they can bless and curse with the same breath.

But let us descend to particulars. And as believing that there is one God, is the first degree of faith, we will begin with that. Do you believe then that there is a God who is always present, holy, hating iniquity, just to punish the impenitent, and to pardon all who repent and believe in Christ Jesus? If this is your faith, you are a rational believer. But what effect has it had? As a sinner, has it made you tremble? If not, by what is it to be known? Wherein does it differ from infidelity? Alas, if you do not so believe the Lord's truth as to fear the infelicity due to offenders, your faith is without fruit; it is dead, and serves only to deceive you. Yea, so short is it of what it should be, that satan is your superior, you cannot rank with him in that respect; for he believes, and trembles, he believes that future damnation is his due, and trembles for fear of it. And is it not due to you? Has not God said, the wicked shall dwell with the devil and his angels? If so, how little does your case differ from theirs?—Farther; the fear of God is the *beginning of wisdom*. Hence, where that fear is not, there is nothing but folly. Are you then a fool? I fear so. You know not the Lord. Neither are you sensible whether he is angry or pleased with you. Yea you are so insensible of yourself, that you know not whether you
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be a saint or a sinner, a child of God or of the devil, an heir of heaven or of hell. Hence his fear is neither in your heart nor before your eyes. Alas! that is less than is in hell!—Moreover, to fear God, is to hate iniquity. But by living in it, you shew that you love it. What avails then your professing to believe, while you curse and swear, lie and get drunk, break sabbaths and commit whoredoms, cheat and defraud your neighbours, &c. If you believe the Lord is present, and privy to all you do, how dare you commit things prohibited on pain of his eternal displeasure? Your courage would fail in the presence of a king. But he knows your thoughts also. If your neighbours knew them, where would you hide your head? And yet he is ten thousand times more to be feared than they. They can but punish the body; but he can destroy body and soul in hell. And what are all the evils in the world, compared to that? They are not fit to be set in competition with it. If then ye do not fear God's eternal wrath, it is because you know nothing as you ought to know.—Again, If you believe there is a God against whom you have sinned; you pray to him for pardon. Perhaps you repeat the petitions taught you when a child, and have never understood their meaning. So you are no wiser in that respect, than you were many years ago. Alas! how unhappy for you to have to do with a God who hears and sees! A dead idol could not detect your senseless way of supplicating. You might then say your prayers as fast and as foolishly as you would, and your folly not be found out. Nor, perhaps, when you pray, do you expect any blessing; which evidences, that you neither know the nature nor the end of prayer; and, therefore, offer the sacrifice of a fool. Surely then it is custom, not conscience, that makes you pray.

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But have you no wants? None that you know; sin having darkened your mind and deadened your heart. Therefore though a sinner, you know no want of a Saviour. Sin is not your burthen, shame and curse; neither do you feel God's displeasure in a guilty conscience, nor fear suffering the vengeance of eternal fire: For you are as unconcerned as if you had not sinned. What a farce then is all your public and private prayer!

And as you are insensible of your sins, and safe, as you suppose, from the danger of suffering for them; you deceive yourself by believing that you are something, when you are nothing. Of this, your practice is also a proof; for you neither fear God, nor regard man. You do as you will for him, his law is no rule to you: Whatever you choose, how contrary soever to his command, is done. But be not deceived; for *he that sinneth, is of the devil.*—Nor have you any care for your fellow-creatures; inasmuch as neither by precept, prayer, nor example do you seek to save them. Alas, as you cannot compare with devils, in respect of faith; neither can you with some of the damned, in regard of charity. Dives wanted one raising from the dead to prevent the damnation of his brethren. But that is no care of yours. See then, in devils and Dives, your superiors in faith and charity! And mind this monition: "He that will not fear the wrath of God, must feel it:" If you do not fear it in time, you will feel it for ever in eternity.—But having long imitated the devils in sinning; now learn to be like them in faith, fear, and trembling. Be a volunteer in this service, lest you be prest into it by eternal pain. Reflect upon your folly; review all the parts of your past life, and observe your intentions as well as words and works; for the Lord weigheth the thoughts and scaneth the ways
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of men. Judge yourselves that you be not judged with the world. But if you refuse, you will be forced; if this world be a school of wrong, hell is of right. There you will know the worth of good by the want of it; and the evil of sin by its punishment. Yea, the entrance will cure you of ignorance; for if you live a fool, you cannot die one. Death, to sinners, is the door of damnation. Then, if not before, you will believe like the devils. Believe so now; believe that you are a sinner subject to suffer, hovering over the brink of hell. This is your situation. O how slippery! To-day in time; to-morrow you may be in eternity! Now open your eyes and see your sin and suffering. The one is certain, and the other little less so. Turn aside, turn aside from the way which leads to it. Make haste! Alas, if death find you in sin, it will shoot a dart through your heart, which will issue in endless ruin! And oh when the deadly blow is given, what a wretch will you be! Devils and damned souls will be your associates! Fire and brimstone your portion! A guilty conscience your continual remembrancer! An angry God your terror! Eternity the time of your torment! A lost heaven your regret! Sin your shame! And pain your punishment!

And for what is it that you will suffer all this? Are the pleasures of sin enough? Dear bought pleasure! And yet for what else is it that you neglect salvation? Sin, and only sin, is the cause of suffering. Your cups, cards, cursing, lies, nonsense, sabbath-breakings, whoredoms, covetousness, and other criminalities procure you a place in the pit! For these you barter heaven, sell yourself to the devil, defeat Christ's design in dying for you, rob God of his glory, grieve the holy spirit, harden sinners in the way to hell, offend saints, weary angels, and treasure up wrath against the day of wrath! Will you then, can you complain if God cut you down

in a moment? If he does, what will your sins do for you in sufferings? Will they be able to deliver? No, nor afford the least relief. Come then to your senses, and see how imminent your danger is. Look over life's narrow verge, and behold the tremendous ocean of endless ruin! O think how near it stands! In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye you may be in it.

Now let your faith be effectual, let it form a fear of that ruin to which you are exposed by reason of your sins. Call heaven and earth to your aid. They are faithful witnesses of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. And run over the ancient days for evidences of his justice. Remember his judgment in a world covered with water! The burning of Sodom and Gomorah! His wonders in Egypt! The thunders of Sinai! With earthquakes and famine, pestilence and war, and all other instruments of his indignation! These are emblems of hell, the dire tokens of his eternal displeasure; and sufficient, in the case of sinners, to form that faith which worketh fear! Believe then that the Lord is displeased with you. This is done by the devils. And you have the same cause. Be not worse than they. It is a shame to be out-done by them. And yet if you do not, they leave you behind. O consider this, and be confounded! Sharp are the arrows of the Almighty! If he shoot at you in his anger, you will both feel and fear! Anticipate it, and turn it aside; believe it, and blunt the edge of it; fear it, and you shall not feel it for ever. Thus imitate the devils, till you can believe to better purpose!

But some already believe, and tremble. A painful, yet profitable thing: For to know our disease, is half our cure. But, conclude not that you are safe; for to believe like those in hell, is not to believe

lieve like Abraham. Guilt is punishment, it is a participation of eternal pain. That is your portion. Being then of the second order of believers, advance to the third. You believe in God's justice; now believe in his mercy, and leave satan behind. Once he was before you; but being come up with him, stop not till you have believed to the saving of your soul; till your iniquities are forgiven, and your heart is renewed in holiness.

And let those who have believed to the righteousness Abraham did; consider whether the fruit of their faith corresponds with his. Abraham was the pattern of the faithful as well in obedience as believing. If then you have copied him in the first, see that you do it in the second. It lies at your option. Abraham was not compelled, by any foreign power, to offer his son. Nor is any believer to do any commanded thing. They are qualified to comport with every command. But the principle of faith, in its actings, depends on the use of its possessor. Abraham shewed his, by his works. In the most critical case, he was careful to keep a conscience void of offence. Is there then nothing too dear to part with, that you may serve the Lord without reserve? Or does some idol share with him in your affection? If any thing lessens your love to the Lord, your zeal for the honour of his name, and your labour for the good of mankind, it is an evil of which you are the author, and for which you must give an account. See then that you eye the Lord in every thing; and labour, like Abraham, to serve him. Faith works by obedience; and obedience strengthens, yea perfects faith. If then you decline no cross, nor suffering to do your master's will; you walk in the steps of Abraham, and follow God as dear children. Happy they who walk by this rule, who shew their faith by their works!

R O M A N S, Chap. ii. Ver. 4, 5.

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

NOTWITHSTANDING the confidence of some, concerning the preordination and necessity of human actions, the decree that every man must do as he does, and, consequently, as the Lord ordained him to do; it is certain, the apostle was of a different mind, inasmuch as he here supposes, they might despise the means used to bring them to repentance. Either then they could act contrary to what they should do, or the Lord was not sincere in using those means to bring them to that end.

But the constitution of the human mind is such, as evidences that man is free in what he does. It is principled with a degree of intelligence and volition, a power to know and choose. And were it not so, he would not be accountable for his conduct. But though free in himself; yet if he be over-ruled by the Lord's decree, and necessitated to act; or if he so depend on the influence of outward things,

things, as that his actions are necessarily determined by them; to be treated as a free agent, and to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire for forced offences, is so contradictory and cruel, that if some did not earnestly contend for this strange sort of doctrine, he might be judged unwise who should spend time to confute it.

And forasmuch as the apostle disapproved of what they did; it argues, that he did not believe the Lord ordained them to do so; or, if he did believe it, in reprobating their conduct, he reproved him who decreed it. Moreover, if God has predetermined all actions, and necessitates the execution of them; whenever he speaks against any action of man, (and the Bible abounds therewith) he opposes his own purpose, and condemns his own decree. But as that is impossible; it infers, that he never so decreed.

In discoursing on the text, I shall, 1. speak of repentance. 2. Of the things which lead lead to it. 3. Of the despisers of those things, with their way, and end. And, 4. conclude with some use of the whole.

I. Repentance is a change from a sinful to a holy state, both of principle and practice. It is also the gift of God, and the duty of man. A gift, in respect of the grace by which it is wrought; and a duty, in regard of the use of that grace. *God, saith Peter, hath exalted his Son to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.* As a prince, he commands all men to repent; and as a Saviour, he assists them in the work of it: For he worketh in them both to will and to do, and requires them to work out their own salvation. Intreating of which, two particulars may be considered. And,

First, it is stiled the *foundation of repentance from dead works*. Christ, by his death, is the meritorious foundation; but this is the beginning of that change, which is wrought by his Spirit. Dead works, are acts of disobedience, which merit the displeasure of God, and subject the sinner to death.

Sin is a contrariety to God's righteous law. Repentance commences in a conviction of it. And to be convinced of it, is to know, that it is displeasing to God, prejudicial to the practicer, and, in many cases, detrimental to others. Nor is this a rational conviction only, but a conscionable sense of the evil of sin also; for it enters its essence, and exhibits its enmity to God and all that is good. It likewise shews the connection betwixt principles and practices; manifesting that where practical sin habitually prevails, there the heart is destitute of the knowledge, love, and likeness of God. A necessary consequence of which is, all its effects, whether sacred or civil, are pregnant with its evil properties. Hence sin, and only sin, is the offspring of such: Their religious services are but counterfeits; the form of religion without the power; practiced for applause, and not to please God: And their civil, like their sacred actions, are sinful also: *for the plowing of the wicked is sin*. This is the first particular implied in repentance. The

2d. Is sorrow proportionable to the nature and number of sins committed. Sin is so offensive and dishonourable to God, so abounding with evil to its author and others, that a right understanding of it, will be succeeded with sorrow. Whoever sees that he has offended the Deity in perhaps ten thousand instances, has murdered his own soul by the multitude of his sins, contributed to the destruction of many by his precepts and practice, and finds himself deserving of, and doomed to, everlasting damnation,

damnation, will soften at the sight. And by how much his sins have been committed against knowledge, means of, and motives to, the contrary practice, by so much is its evil aggravated. Hence his folly being writ in legible characters, he writes bitter things against himself. The chief of sinners, he confesses, is characteristic of him. He knows none so vile. Others may have gone far in folly, but, to his own apprehension, not so far as himself. This is the true sentiment of his soul. But though sorrow for sin, is a proper expression of repentance; yet not sufficiently expressive of *repentance from dead works*; conviction and contrition, how clear and deep soever, if not accompanied with a real renouncing of sin, are insufficient, and leave the business of repentance imperfect. Therefore,

3dly. Sin must be forsaken. By this only can godly sorrow be distinguished from its contrary; from that which is hypocritical, and from that which is in hell. And herein the sinner must be sincere and universal. Sincere; not for sinister ends. Ceasing from sin for other reasons than a sense of its being hateful to God and hurtful to men, is not acceptable to him. When sin, through infirmity, old age, or external hinderances, &c. ceases, it is involuntary, rather forsakes than is forsaken. But right reformation being the result of choice; penitents must perform that duty with an avowed voluntary resolution, engaging as heartily in it, as before in the commission of evil. And this must be done without reserve: For if any sin be retained, it is not the repentance required. Nor will any consideration justify it. *If, says Christ, thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out*; if any thing contribute as much to thy satisfaction, as the eye by beholding amiable objects, but is obstructive of religious delights; a right regard to the interest of the soul, will

will pronounce a complete separation the most expedient: Heaven being preferable, with the loss of all sinful sublunary joys, to hell, with all that sin and the world can afford. *If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off*; if any person or performance minister as much to thy temporal profit, as it does; yet if it obstruct thy salvation, it must be forsaken. Yea whatever is dishonourable to God, injurious to men, or detrimental to the doers of them, however pleasant or profitable, must be abandoned; inasmuch as any sin retained, not only renders repentance defective, but will also be a bar to future benefits: For only when a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, &c. shall he save his soul from destruction. A prince, however abundant in goodness, will not pardon a rebel in arms against him. Nor is there any promise of forgiveness, but to those who forsake their sins; God will not so prostitute his mercy, as to pardon the practically impenitent: Therefore they who continue in sin, must not expect to see the salvation of God: But if it be heartily abhorred, and resolvedly forsaken, there is hope; especially, if to the preceding parts of repentance, be added,

4thly. Practicing the contrary things, using the means of grace, and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. The penitent then must substitute, in the place of his sins, such words and works as express the Lord's fear, a due reverence of his name, gratitude for his benefits, &c. And in respect of men, restore what was fraudulently taken away or unlawfully detained, discharge just debts, deal honestly, speak truly, forgive injuries, overcome evil with good, requite cruelty with kindness, relieve their temporal necessities, and promote, by all possible means, their salvation.—To which he must add the use of the means of grace, by searching the scriptures,

tures, hearing them explained and enforced, and by reading such books as tend to inform the judgment and excite the affections; meditating on what is read and heard, and reducing it to practice; watching diligently the motions of the mind, and by self-denial keeping the body under; praying, communicating, fasting, &c.—Above all, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance with God; for he is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by him. This is the first thing signified by repentance.—The second is that which is unto life. An instance of which, is this: *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* The nature of which may be collected from the apostle's account. The time for the Gentiles to hear the word of the gospel, being come; Peter, instructed by a vision to speak to Cornelius and his company, said, *To him (Christ) give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive the remission of sins. And while he yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.* This was the immediate effect of his preaching. But how different from the sense of it? That was the forgiveness of sins; this the gift of the Holy Ghost. These are different, though compatible things, being given and received at the same time. Or, perhaps, the cause is put for the effect; the Holy Ghost reveals the forgiveness of sins to the conscience, and works all Christian graces in the constitution of the soul; which quiet and conform it to God.—And as Cornelius feared God, he had received the grace, and discharged the duty, of the first part of repentance, and therefore sought, and was susceptible of, the second; which, consisting of these, was properly adapted to his condition, inasmuch as pardon, by reversing the sentence and removing the sense of condemnation from the soul,
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gives life, and the holy spirit, by expelling its sinful dead quality, forms the holy living image of God in it, which, according to its degree, is life proportionably. Every faculty is favoured with what is peculiar to it: The darkness of the mind is removed by being illuminated with the light of heaven, whereby it beholds the glorious likeness of the Lord in itself, and his glory shining upon it; the will's diabolical disposition is changed into that which is divine, and rendered obedient to him; and the affections are so refined as to have regard to their respective objects; loving and hating, hoping and fearing, &c. according to the good or evil of them. And where this change is perfect, there the soul is wholly alive. And being of the religious and immortal kind, it realizes eternal things to the mind, heaven is anticipated by a participation of it. This is repentance. To the effecting of which, the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, are designed.

II. And first, of the *riches of his goodness*. Goodness, is his compassion and kindness, the love of pity and good-will wherewith he loveth mankind, notwithstanding their sinfulness. Its riches, are expressive of the abundant blessings flowing from it: The general blessings of providence: The interposals of the Almighty in the way of judgment and mercy: The word and sacraments, and whatever else that tends to turn men unto him. More especially, the grace of his spirit, which enlightens, quickens, and strengthens the heart, and teacheth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. This grace is given as an antidote, to cure the soul of whatever disorder it has contracted; in particular,

to awaken it to a sense of sin, to manifest the displeasure of God in a guilty conscience, to point out the ruin that awaits the sinner, and to provoke him to repent: and, when heartily concurred with, sins become hateful, and fall off like the leaves of a tree, when the invigorating spirit ceases to flow in its branches. This is the effect of its contrariety to, and the powerful efforts it makes against, prohibited practices. And besides its natural tendency so to do, its commission in the covenant of grace, is to conquer all adverse power, and to create all things new; to raise the soul to its original condition, by giving it an habitual preparation for heaven.—But this, through the willing ignorance or perverseness of many, is prevented: which renders *forbearance* indispensibly necessary. Forbearance is a suspension of punishments due to the sinner for what he has done. And were the Lord extreme to punish as soon as sin is committed, the consequence would be fatal; death, destruction of soul and body, would succeed. But his patience interposes, and prevents a speedy infliction of evil. And herein he gives a conspicuous proof of having no pleasure in the death of a sinner; and, by the same procedure, exhibits the good pleasure of his will in promoting repentance.—And where this respite is disregarded, and does not produce the desired effect; *Long-suffering* is added, to answer the same blessed purpose. This is forbearance perpetuated, that the time of probation may serve to produce repentance, or render them inexcusable, and turn their guilty reflections wholly on themselves. And this is sufficiently prolonged to answer the one or the other of these ends: The Lord, in the general, few exceptions to be made, sparing sinners as long as other circumstances suffer them to live; few dying
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by an immediate stroke of his justice.* Yea, he not only permits the guilty to survive their sins, and, thereby, to escape punishment for a season; but by his providence prevents from many things which would prejudice life. Thus he lengthens out man's state of trial. In which, he adapts such measures, suggests such councils, and confers such benefits as are best calculated to promote his repentance. The riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering then, are the general means (in which are included innumerable particulars) granted to do the sinful children of men good.—These the apostle contractedly calls, *the goodness of God*. This concise and emphatic expression, is significant of the blessings and means, unmerited of men, which God, whose nature and property is ever to do good, vouchsafes to bring them to repentance. Goodness indeed! For what sinner deserves repeated offers of grace, much forbearance and long-suffering, tending to save from the worst of evils, and to possess of the best of goods?

Leadeth thee to repentance. Leadeth; not driveth: For he uses no force inconsistent with freedom of choice. This is clear from his manner of working, for if he forced men to repent, forbearance and long-suffering would not be necessary, as the first irresistible effort of his spirit would be sufficient. But, it is certain, the Holy Ghost may be resisted both in his internal influences, and in the words of those who speak by him. Stephen charged the Jews with *always resisting the Holy Ghost*. And, St. Paul, not without cause, dissuaded the primitive Christians from *grieving and quenching the spirit*:
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* Hereditary diseases; excesses of various sorts; improper treatment of the body; and many other things, which it would be absurd to say, he is either the author or the executor of, are the general causes of the early decay of human compositions.

The inseparable effects of resisting him. So sure then as the scripture is true, the grace of God may be prevented from effecting his purposes.—Nor do forbearance and long-suffering, though excellently calculated, so subserve his purpose, as in all cases to render his grace effectual to the reformation of sinners. Forty years did the Lord bear with the rebellion of the Jews in the wilderness, which issued only in the destruction of the majority of them. And, in the case of Jezebel, he says, *I gave her space to repent, and she repented not*: Which evidence, that an incumbent duty may be left undone.

However, though he does not compel men to comply; yet his goodness, in the repeated efforts of his spirit, and other things calculated to profit, endureth daily. To which, whoever takes heed, and stirs up himself to follow, will be led from the delusive ways of wickedness, and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. And, by a display of mercy and grace, the conscience will be quieted, and the will and affections created a-new in Christ Jesus; convincing grace will issue in peace and a measure of purity; and that divine principle, (naturally tending heavenward) influenced by the Holy Ghost, and assisted by various other things, will lead the soul into deeper acquaintance with things divine; every grace will ripen into perfection, into all the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Then will the soul be wholly new-born, and rendered capable of doing and suffering all the will of God.

III. I shall now observe how these things may be despised. And this, I conceive, is effectually done, by treating them contrary to their nature and the design of the giver. The degree of which, in respect of design and deed, in different persons, may be differently done. Of which, ignorance, indifference, disobedience, &c. are causes. *Ignorance,*

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in many, is a prevailing evil; and yet, in none, an excusable one: For, as Christ enlightens every man that cometh into the world; their ignorance is their own, is what they have contracted by loving darkness better than light: therefore their foolishness will not free them from the punishment due to despisers. It is a melancholy consideration, that many are become so insensible of the soul, as not to know what is necessary for it. Hence, reproofs, instructions, &c. whether ministered by men or the Most High, tending to awaken and apprize them of danger, appear impertinent. A guilty conscience they consider as the greatest calamity in life; and therefore judge it a proper expedient to deliver themselves from so formidable a foe. So they flight its menaces for what is amiss, refuse to comply with its measures for future amendment, and divert their minds from so serious a monitor; rush into company, abound in trifling conversation, amuse themselves with dress, cards, songs, &c. fill their heads with worldly cares, lay schemes for profit or pleasure, and plan as if they were to live for ever. Thus by mistaking the nature and tendency of that concern which is consequent on an enlightened mind, and by seeking satisfaction from temporal things, they senselessly despise the work of God on their souls.

And as some through ignorance, so others through *indifference*, despise the goodness of God. They know it to be his work, and to what it tends, nor offer any opposition to it. But because they are not earnest in religious exercises, they lie at the mercy of every opposer, and make no proficiency in the work of repentance. And this is a necessary effect of that folly; inasmuch as an evil heart and vicious habits contracted through a long continuance in sin, are not so to be subdued. Less than a fixed resolution,
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and firm endeavours, assisted by grace, cannot suffice. Whoever deals with a slack hand, will not prosper. The weight of tendency in the evil disposition and habit, must be counterbalanced by care and labour proportionate, or the course of the soul, in its desires, &c. will not be changed and turned into a contrary channel. As a proof of this, the prophet represents it as difficult for an habitual sinner to cease from sin, as for an Ethiopian to change his skin. How then should they whose duty it is to give all diligence, do any thing by indifference? Alas, if they will not be at the pains to watch and curb the motions of their minds, and avoid, as much as in them lies, all outward occasions of evil; it will be impossible for them to repent, reform, and bring forth fruit to perfection. And this, though not so soon, nor with so aggravated circumstances, will as certainly issue in their being forsaken of God, as a more criminal conduct: For, if the *foundation of repentance from dead works*, be not laid; that which is unto life, will never obtain. A wise God, whatever foolish man may do, will not build without a foundation; he will raise no castle in the air, will not forgive sin and renew the heart in holiness, while dead works remain unrepented of and unforsaken. Thus by preferring ease before earnestness, the goodness of God is despised by them.

Disobedience to the dictates of an enlightened mind, is, likewise, another way of despising divine things. Some, contrary to their own conviction, practice prohibited things. They not only know what they should do or leave undone, but designedly omit or do contrary thereto: They harden their hearts, and hate to be reformed. In effect, they defy the Almighty, and bid him do his worst. Yea, they take up arms against him, by practically opposing his proceedings. They are determined to

continue in their old course, let what will be the consequence. So every good beginning is rendered abortive, the holy Spirit is grieved, and the Lord is provoked by them.

And when forbearance and long-suffering are abused to the same sinful purpose, it is a defeat of all that the Deity can do; especially, if persisted in till the day of grace be expired. For, when a suspension of his wrath encourages them to continue in sin; the respite for repentance becomes an occasion of multiplied offences. And the greater the degree of long-suffering the greater will be the measure of impenitency and punishment. This is so to despise the merciful measures of the Most High, as to make them the cause of the greatest evils; and evidences the truth of the wise man's declaration: *That because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil.* And forasmuch as the despisers of God's goodness are not led to repentance; I shall now point out their practice, as signified by,

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. There being but two guides; they who so despise the goodness of God as not to be led by it, follow their own hard and impenitent heart. But after thy *hardness*. Hardness, the property of a stone, to which the heart is compared, denotes its want of religious discernment; for stone, being rather a compact than a porous substance, blindness is attributed to it. This is the state of a wicked man's heart. It does not discern the evil of sin, nor the excellency of God's goodness, has no apprehension of danger, nor any prospect of future felicity. Another property of the same principle, is *impenitency*. This is its stubbornness, in refusing to repent. It will not forsake sin,

fin, for it hates to be reformed. And this, which neither knows nor obeys the goodness of God, is man's guide. Led by which, he walks secure in the midst of danger, and heartily embraces things prohibited on pain of eternal damnation. This is his way, and the end will be accordingly: For, he adds,

Treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath. The day of wrath, being connected with the *righteous judgment of God*, is, in the commencing of it, the day of judgment; and, in the continuance, the day of eternity. At that day the Lord will reveal his righteous judgment, and give to every one according to what he has done. The business of sinners, in reference to that day, is treasuring up wrath. The reward is put for the work; for wrath denotes the punishment due to sin. They treasure it up by repeated disobediences; every act tends to make them rich, in wrath.—Their treasury is hell; there they lay up wrath. And continuing to do so till death, the soul will feed on the fruit of its labour, and at the last day, soul and body will receive their full reward.—Nor will any share with them, for they treasure it up for *themselves*: The work is all their own, and so will be the reward. And he that lives fastest and longest, will be the richest: *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.* This will be the portion of all who die in disobedience.

IV. I shall now make some use of what has been spoken. And first, it is clear, that to all who have sinned, repentance is an indispensable duty: *Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish.* And the nature of this is as obvious, as the thing itself is necessary. It is a ceasing from whatever is sinful in design, word, and work, and obtaining mercy and all the mind which was in Christ Jesus. And the good-

ness of God is given to produce it. Nor can any fail of so repenting; but by, in some sort, despising that goodness.—Have you then been led to repentance? It is yea or nay, you have or have not. If not; if you have continued blind and hard, loving and living in sin, acting as if there were no God, no judgment, no damnation; alas, wretched man, you have only lived ill, lived to lay up wrath, to be rich in fire and brimstone. And is it a light thing to be guilty of so great an evil? Will the loss of heaven and the gaining of hell be so easy, that the pleasures of sin must purchase them? We pity those who lose their life for breaking the laws of a land. But how wretched are they, whether to be pitied or not, who, through their own voluntary madness, subject themselves to eternal torments. This is the most deplorable condition in the world. The most wretched temporal circumstances which imagination can paint, are nothing compared with it.—Whoever had a guilty conscience, felt the most insupportable burthen of life: For, *a wounded spirit who can bear!* To which being added, eternal fire, dark despair, and all the other circumstances of God's wrath, it may well be termed a torment unspeakable.

Who then, in the name of goodness, will be so unwise as to follow a guide which leads to destruction? Is wrath so desirable, that sinners must treasure it up at the expence of all that is great and good? A dear purchase! Oh how will their repentings, in hell, kindle for this! What agonies will tear their throbbing hearts! Alas! tongue cannot declare what such wretched souls will suffer. The Lord's whole procedure is despised by them. Sin, the worst of evils, is preferred before it. The divine spirit, means of grace, forbearance, long-suffering, salvation, and heaven are sacrificed to some
darling.

darling desire; to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life. What madness is this! None in hell would be guilty of it! Had the damned a prospect of being saved, would they not prize it? Were the hardest, but possible conditions, imposed on them, surely they would perform them! And wilt not thou, O man, break of thy sins and turn to God, that he may have mercy on thee? Once the damned were as thou art. Wilt thou be as they are? A time was wherein they might have been saved, But it is now no more. The Father who made, the Son who redeemed, and the Holy Ghost who would have sanctified them, will now shew them no mercy. Art thou willing to be numbered with them? Sit down, madman, sit down and count the cost. The loss of the light of the Lord's countenance, the society of saints and angels, and the whole happiness of heaven, is the price thou must pay. Thy gain will be the blackness of darkness, the company of devils and damned souls, and God's eternal wrath. Ah, friend, a slight touch of this, will make thee cry for water to cool thy tongue!

What sayest thou then sinner? Art thou determined to sin and suffer for ever? If this be thy resolution, thou art a fool, a knave, and a madman; a murderer of thyself, an enemy to God, and a friend to the devil; a hater of heaven, a lover of hell, and one that labours to be rich in wrath. Perhaps thou wilt say, an evil heart, bad customs, strong habits, wicked company, &c. make it difficult to cease from sin. True. What then? Thou must do it or be damned. Marvel not at this, for there is no medium; 'tis repent or perish. Cease then from sin, or down to damnation thou goest. See sinner the furious flame ready to receive thee! There is thy portion, if thou persistest in sin. And will thy madness suffer thee so to sacrifice thyself?

Well,

Well, if sin be better than salvation, hell than heaven, misery than happiness, fill up thy measure, and know that thou livest not for nothing, thou treasurest up wrath. And if thou livest long, and dyest unforgiven, great will be thy portion in the pit: For God will reward thee according to thy works. But the circumstance most to be feared, is the eternity of thy torments. This cuts off all possibility of obtaining the lost inheritance of heaven. After weathering out the storms of tempestuous wrath for many millions of years, thou art no nearer the end still. How shocking the thought! What unparalleled madness is it then to continue in sin! A wretch bent on thy own ruin, determined to be damned, let the Lord do what he will to save them! Resisting the Holy Ghost, and forcing thy way through all the barriers of God's forbearance and long-suffering, to make good thy landing in hell! Wouldest thou but take half the pains to use, thou dost to abuse the goodness of God, it would be well with thee for ever. The angels would tune their harps; for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Who then is wise and will consider this? Two eternal prizes, heaven and hell, are before thee, and thou art bid to choose. Wisdom or folly may be thy guide. If thou followest grace, through forbearance and long-suffering, repentance may obtain. But if thou goest after an hard and impenitent heart, sin will increase, and wrath be treasured up. It lies at thy option. The Lord dissuades from sinning, but will not compel thee to repent. He wills and waits for it; *for he is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Stop then and consider thy case. But first observe the nature and state of thy soul. It is spiritual; in consequence of which, it can think and will, suspend,

pend, alter, or continue its actings. These imply knowledge, will, and power. Knowledge to judge of, a will to exercise that judgment, and a power to determine the manner and measure of it. Knowledge and will evidence that it is not senseless matter, and power to determine itself, shews its free agency. And this self-determining property renders its possessor accountable for his natural and civil conduct. But to be so in a moral sense, requires a disposition corresponding with moral objects. That disposition, through Christ, is restored to all men; and, therefore, while it continues, all may correspond with the Lord's moral commands. And, though hardened finners are free to evil only; yet while the day of grace endures, and the spirit of the Lord moves upon their minds, and infuses light and life into them, they may determine in favour of that which is good.—Has that power been used or abused? Have you left your sins as evil and dangerous things? If that step be taken, it is well. Yet ere you can be safe or happy, another, viz. repentance unto life, must be. Are you then, as Cornelius was, fearing God and praying for his blessing? If by faith and prayer, and a diligent use of other means, you seek the Lord, with him, you shall be favoured with the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then will your soul live. The love of God, shed abroad in your heart, will make you forget all the dire terrors of his wrath; for sorrow you will have joy unspeakable and full of glory. And if from the commencing of this, you follow on, your heart will die daily to evil and live unto good: You will be changed from glory to glory, into the image of God, by his spirit. And being all renewed, you will be wholly alive; sin and death will have no place in you. Then may you present yourself a living sacrifice to the

the Lord.—And how happy are they, who are thus prepared to obey! Let them imitate, in point of diligence, those who treasure up wrath. Be as active, zealous, and constant as they. Be rich in good works. So will your life be pleasing to God, profitable to yourself and others, and, at the last day, you will give up your accounts with joy, and be finally saved.

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